Published by
Centro Studi Bhaktivedanta
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Via Livornese Est 172
56030 Perignano (PI)

Preface

This text includes some parts of *Indian Psychology* by Prof. Raghunath Safaya[1], from which we have presented the historical review. However, in some passages, this author has a different opinion especially in matters of evaluation. For this reason I have expressed my own interpretation of the relevant phenomena, while quoting the original opinion of Prof. Safaya without changing anything, out of respect for his work and also for the objective value of his opinion.

The book layout allows the reader to see clearly the distinction between the two original works; often the two texts coincide or integrate each other, but at other times there is a difference in approach or conclusion.

The quotes from *Indian Psychology* have paragraph idents and smaller size of font.

I have chosen this format because I am convinced that a presentation of different points of view constitutes in itself an advantage for the reader.

Readers interested in further studies on the matter are referred to the texts listed in the Bibliography.

Acknowledgement

I want to express my deep gratitude to all the people who have offered their assistance in compiling this book. Specifically, I thank F. Belcari, P. Bianchi, M. Farabollini, C. Honnorat, I. Nuti, M. Pomello Chinaglia, R. Safaya, R. Tenani, whose valuable and constant participation and cooperation have generously helped me in the various stages of the work on this book.

Perignano, Pisa, 19th September 2002

[1]Prof. Raghunath Safaya, *Indian Psychology,* Munshiram Manoharlal, 1976. Prof. Safaya has been Headmaster of the Government College of Education, Chandigarh, and is considered one of the greatest experts in the study and research on ancient and modern Indian psychology.

Introduction to Indian Psychology

India and the West

Preface

In order for the Western public to conduct a serious study on Hindovedic psychology, they must first of all take into consideration the roots of this science, which go deep into the rich and vast philosophical universe of India, containing innumerable power-ideas and universal symbols that powerfully stimulate the imagination and creativity of human beings.

Generally lectures and texts meant to popularize the philosophical and psychological aspects of Hindovedic civilization depict only the externals of phenomena, which are not observed, studied and described in great detail.

Because such cursory treatment is frequently misleading, we feel a strong duty to present the topic in depth. Also, due to such inaccurate and incomplete information this fascinating heritage hasn't been successfully integrated in the Western cultural, leaving the Western public mostly unaware of the immense heritage of Indian culture in the fields of psychology, philosophy, religion and sociology.

Prejudice, colonialist bias, outright falsification and the other Euro centric clichés from the 18th century which generated the vast majority of the Indology texts (even recent ones), are now crumbling under the blows of modern scientific research.

Several new findings combined with the diminished justifications for exploitative attitudes increasingly reveal the genuine culture of India; not only as one that hails from antiquity, but as great civilization in its own right in both substance and destination. Furthermore, it is revealed that this culture has developed with the aim of reactivating and

cultivating within each individual the essential strength and introspective talents, and powers of self knowledge and self transformation that lay dormant within. Regrettably, because of successful affirmation of the manipulation and technological and financial control from the West, these powers and functions have been neglected and have long since been forgotten.

However, the same overpowering and subtle influence of man on things, and of man on man, is again opening, even tragically, the painful wound of insufficient answers to the existential needs. Having lost awareness of our own real self in the dense mists of ignorance, and neglected our duty to find the purpose of life, we are at risk of throwing our contemporary society in an ever-spreading neurosis.

The science of psychology in Vedic India, most probably the first of its kind in the history of humanity, offers knowledge and methods that: concretely and efficiently help the harmonious development of the personality, fully integrate all aspects of consciousness, reconcile opposites, and harmonize the subconscious elements of the self. Furthermore, the amalgamation of the elements of Hindovedi psychological understanding leads to the creation of an integrated, fruitful, and totally satisfactory connection between: feelings and thoughts, intuition and reason, deep subconscious issues and operational rationality, leading to the solid and ultimately fulfilling experience of realizing one's relationship with the higher planes of existence.

We are not dealing here with some abstract descriptive formulation, independent from the people who express it and those who may eventually use it. On the contrary, it is a practical living philosophy, which is made all the more sensible if the recipient is able to receive it with the intention of broadening his own awareness.

I. Introduction

In the ancient Indian tradition, each science is considered not a separate discipline, but rather as a part that is strictly interconnected with all the other parts, in a universal project, an organic and integrated program of learning and education, aimed at the development and growth of the human being on all anthropological levels. Therefore each science contributes the maximum benefits when it is studied and applied in synergy with the others. Traditionally, it is understood that only this type of knowledge can give that complete picture of man and the world necessary for a balanced and fully conscious life.

Generally the Westerner tends to focus his attention outside himself, and therefore, although he has become expert in analysing with precision and completeness the phenomena of the objective reality, still remains quite ignorant in the study of his own self and of his inner reality.

Experimental sciences offer an important contribution in the field of perception by providing sophisticated instruments for observation and research, enabling us to probe the phenomenal and trace out the laws governing it. However, modern scientific research (especially quantum physics) has already demonstrated how much the observation of reality and reality itself also depend on the consciousness of the observer, on the viewpoint he has developed; this concept has been suitably syntesized by Aldous Huxley[2]:

"Experience is not what happens to you; it is what you do in regard to what happens.".

In order to make our research more reliable, therefore, it is necessary to study not only the object, but the subject too - and even more carefully than the object. We need to

[2] English writer (1894-1963). In his books, the satire on British bourgeoise expands to criticise uncontrolled scientific progress.

analyse the subtle functions of his mind and body, and understand the nature of his deep and unchanging self.

In this regard, the Hindovedic texts offer an inestimable heritage of knowledge that can integrate the acquisition of today's objective disciplines with a science that is extremely ancient and yet surprisingly modern. They explain in depth the dynamics of the inner world, of which external reality usually is a projection, by using an effective method, successfully tested for thousands of years, for the development of the perceptive instruments and the elevation of consciousness. In facts, the ancient Indian culture and specifically the tradition of *Yoga* offer the most ancient school of psychology, capably describing the nature and functions of the psyche with accuracy, using a scientific system and specific language, and in such detail that even modern psychology will be greatly benefitted.

According to the *Vedas* the mind is an object rather than a subject; it is the "filter" used by the conditioned being to see the world. Defined as "internal sense"[3], the mind has a key role in determining the quality of the existence of every individual, because it is the operative center which directs each action. The quality of mental health determines the quality of perception, and hence the quality of behavior and life, too. Vedic literature explains that neither time nor space are absolute realities, since they are lived individually according to specific modalities. Phenomena like old age, death, relationships between persons, and between persons and things are therefore connected to subjective states of consciousness. The study of the *object* should therefore be conducted together with the study of the *subject* and instruments of perception, exactly because perception and representation of the world depend on the *forma mentis* of the observer.

Traditional Indian thought (except for the *Advaita-vedanta* system) does not raise doubts on the objectivity and

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[3] See *Bhagavata Purana* III.26.14.

reality of the world, but states that our mental images are one of its components, and quite real in themselves as well.

The objects and their corresponding images may not be identical, but are certainly very strictly related, since they are parts of the same process of structuring things.

When trained and controlled in the appropriate techniques, the mind can become man's best friend, but if its contemplations are not based on reality or are even at odds with it, the mind imposes its control on the individual and becomes man's worst enemy. An untrained mind also has an enormous self-destructive power, just like a powerful car that is out of control.

Hindovedic psychology does not reduce the science of psychology to neuro-physiology as is the tendency of some modern psychology schools[4]. This they do generally by negating the specific reality of the psyche in relationship to the reality of the body, and equating the cognition product with a structure that can be reduced to the activity of the nervous system. This then is considered to correspond to physical and biological laws, which are constructible according to objective and experimental parameters. According to Hindovedic psychology the psychic objects (ideas, thoughts, images, emotions, feelings, etc) are not less real and tangible than the physical ones. They are characterized by their own structure and function and can be studied through a methodology that is different from the methods used for tangible bodies and consists mainly in the epistemological method named *pratyaksha*[5] and based on sense perception.

Modern schools of psychology do not interpret the individual psychic process in a theoretical environment based on the materialism-positivism duality, but Hindovedic psychological science is different because it recognizes the existence of a reality beyond the body and the mind - the

[4] See for example Watson's Behaviourism (in the chapter *Contemporary Schools of Psychology and Their Contribution*).

[5] This subject will be further elaborated in the chapter *Methods of Indian Psychology.*

living force, or the conscious subject - who is experiencing the acts of seeing, thinking, feeling etc, through the psychological and physical instruments.

This deep and unchangeable *me*, situated beyond space and time, simply defined as the *self* by the ancient sages, is the real reference point of the cognitive experience. This self is described, in different contexts, with the definitions of *atman, purusha* or *jiva*; all these names indicate the living entity: the spiritual self, or the real subject of perception, who is capable to give light to the intellect, vitality and consciousness to the body.

In Indian psychology, the mind (just like the body) is constituted of material energy (*prakriti*), that has a particular and more subtle nature than the gross physical elements. Western psychology on the other hand identifies the mind (when its specific structure is recognized) as the subject of cognitive experience, and gives no consideration to the existence of an unchangeable self (spirit soul) as the place of consciousness and the "center of gravity" of the personality.

Indian thought, and specifically the *Vaishnava Vedanta*, explains that consciousness dominates over matter, in the microcosm as well as in the macrocosm. The individual body is subjected to the individual consciousness[6], just like the cosmic body, the universe, is pervaded and sustained by a universal Consciousness. The individual consciousness is a part of the Cosmic consciousness. For this reason in the Upanishads we find statements like: "It [the *Brahman*] is far and near, too; it is inside and outside everything"[7], or "Thou are That [the *Brahman*]"[8], whence we understand that the spiritual essence sustains and pervades everything, and that the

6 See *Bhagavadgita* XIII.34: "O scion of Bharata, like the sun alone illuminates the entire universe, in the same way the owner of the field [the *atman*] illuminates [with the consciousness] the entire field [the body]". This translation and the following ones are from the same author.
7 *Isha Upanishad mantra* V.
8 See *Chandogya Upanishad* VI.11.3.

individual self is originated by the cosmic Self[9] (as His expansion), and is eternally connected to Him through an eternal relationship[10].

Furthermore, the *Vedas* explain that the constituting elements that constitute the gross and subtle bodies *covering* the embodied living entities (*jivabhuta*) originate from the same divine source[11].

In all traditions and in all times the mystics have always *seen* and described a kind of unity with an interactive and interdependent relationship among all the components of the universe. It seems that modern physics, too, are coming to the same conclusions, albeit through a different research route. Already Einstein, with his general theory of relativity, has demonstrated that space and time are not separate entities, but harmoniously united parts of a greater whole, a four-dimension continuum which is in facts constituted by mass, energy, space and time. Important researchers in modern sub-atomic physics have further expanded the concept. Bohm, for example, has stated that whatever exists in the universe is a continuum: things belong to an undivided whole, even if they possess specific individual qualities. In his writings, this great physicist stresses that the tendency, quite common today, to see a fragmented reality, is not only failing but it could even bring about the extinction of the human species! Many, for example, believe they can exploit the Earth's resources indiscriminately without jeopardizing their own survival, or they think it is possible to treat the various dysfunctions of the organism without considering the entire being[12].

According to the *Vaishnava Vedanta* the consciousness, which is one of the three main attributes of the spiritual self or *atman*, can be altered by substances or psycho-physical forces (while the spiritual being cannot, as

[9] See *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* V.1.1: "[There are] this whole [the *Brahman*] and this whole [the *jiva*]; this whole [*jiva*] is originated by that whole [*Brahman*]. By taking this whole [*jiva*] from that whole [*Brahman*], the whole still remains [same]."

[10] *Bhagavadgita* XV.7.

[11] *Bhagavadgita* VII.4.

[12] See Michael Talbot, *Tutto è uno*. URRA, 1997, pp. 64-5.

his intrinsic nature always remain unchangeable), but it cannot be explained in material terms as if it were a bio-chemical product. It is the consciousness that produces bio-chemicals, and not the other way around.

Thus perception, reflection and elaboration of data is enabled by this function of *atman*, whose main attributes include consciousness and which utilizes the mind as its organ of action. Mind, therefore, is not a reality having its own independent existence: it is not a *subject* but rather an *object.*

Together with the body, the mind is a very sophisticated and powerful instrument that a human being can utilize to know himself and evolve. However, as with all instruments, if not used in the correct way it can be badly damaged, with serious consequences to the individual personality.

The classic texts on *Yoga*, and in general on the Hindovedic tradition, emphatically state that a human being must learn to manage and utilize the psychic instrument, take full control of it and direct it in order to facilitate the acquisition of the deepest possible knowledge of oneself and the world.

The mind could be compared to an archivist who puts away in various files the information received from the senses, in the form of feelings and impressions. If, however, the mind executes the filing work in the wrong way, the intelligence - who is supposed to utilize the data - will direct the subsequent action in a wrong way; hence the popular saying, "if you can't hear well, you will reply even worse."

Disease, sickness, and other unpleasant and painful that happen to the body and to the mind, or to the physical body and to the psychic body, are generally caused by mistakes in perception and evaluation, and subsequently generate wrong behavior that in turn generate disharmony, inner conflicts, and other mental and physical suffering.

In order to properly utilize and even to cure the mind, we must first of all know it deeply, understanding its structure, functioning, extraordinary faculties and limitations. To do that, the essential thing is not identifying

with it. When the subject misidentifies his own psycho-physical instruments of tought and action as the self, he thus loses awareness of his own original individuality, who is spiritual in nature. As a consequence, the being becomes more and more alienated from his real self, and enters in a state of deep confusion and depression.

Hindovedic literature explains the psychological mechanism that misidentifies consciousness with the sum total of one's psychic contents and with the body, manifesting the *ahamkara*, the sense of ego or the reflected and conditioned consciousness.

The *ahamkara* constitutes the first stage of the personality splitting, and subsequently the field of consciousness becomes isolated and limited to the body and mind, thereby losing its original integrity[13].

Since these two are constantly changing - the body being characterized by a continuous flow and turnover of atoms, the psyche being characterized by a "river" of thoughts[14], an endless sequel of *vritti* or mind changes - the individual who is a victim of *ahamkara* identifies himself with a transitory and fleeting personality that is subject to continued oscillations, which inevitably become a source of suffering.

However, the *Vaishnava Vedanta* teaches that the ego produced by *ahamkara* should not be denied or removed, but rather de-conditioned and controlled by the self, so that instead of acting as a barrier it can become a bridge between the individual and his original identity of pure cosciousness. On the other hand, when everything is under the total control of the ego and all its partial and illusory

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13 In this case the individual, completely identified with a distorted and partial vision on himself, unable to perceive anything else, is not even capable of realizing his own conditioning and the fragmentation of his own awareness. This state of consciousness is typical in the most serious mental conditions, like psychosis.

14 According to Bohm, consciousness constitutes a perfect example of undivided and flowing movment, the ebb and flow that cannot be clearly defined, but from which thoughts and ideas spring up to the surface. These products of the psyche are in a sense similar to the ripples or whirlpools produced in a running stream and, exactly like the whirling flow of a stream, some of them can repeat themselves and persist in a more or less constant way, while others are evanescent and disappear as quickly as they appeared. This tendency to crystallize in fixed and rigid patterns is also observed in the thought vortexes (ideas and opinions) which sometimes tend to become sclerotized in the consciousness.

representations, the subject becomes alienated from his deep self (albeit unconsciously); he loses contact with the center of gravity of his own personality and becomes unable to drive his own "vehicle" composed by body and mind (although he may think he is). Completely identified with this vehicle, he receives stimulations from the outside in a totally passive manner, even performing actions (at the mental, verbal of physical level) that will eventually destroy the psycho-physical balance and seriously damage the body-mind vehicle, exactly like an automobile that destroys itself when it goes off the road because the pilot can't control it. It is the lack of spiritual awareness that prevents the individual unable from *correctly* utilizing the body-mind instrument. *Correctly* in this case means using it in harmony with one's own deep issues, and with the order that sustains the universe (*dharma*).

In facts, the body and mind are already structured according a precise system, responding to the natural needs of the living being, to facilitate his progressive inner development. For example, the thousands of billions of neurons, with their endless electro-chemical interactions[15], give to the human brain the capability to represent in the microcosm the complex universe in which we live.

The cosmic order, defined in the *Vedas* as *ritam* or *dharma*, not only organizes the microcosm of man, but all creatures as well, and the life of the entire universe[16], and it is produced by a higher intelligence, of divine nature. This universal mind and intelligence enable each cell of the body to function in complete synergy with the other cells (like the stem cells, for example), and each organ to perform its specific functinos. They also enable the individual mind to elaborate sense perceptions and transmit information and stimulation to the various parts of the system. Everything is

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[15] We could compare the nerve cells of the brain to small trees with many branches or extensions: when the electric message reaches the extremity of one of these branches, it spreads to the outside, like a ripple in the water. Because the neurons are very close to each other, these expanding electric ripples constantly cross each other forming a thick web of interactions and connections..

[16] The word *cosmos* indicates in itself an harmonious and orderly complex; in facts it is derived from the Greek word *kósmos* which means 'order' (as opposed to chaos in the ancient Greeks' cosmogony).

working according to a software that must have been programmed by someone.
The Vedic texts define this someone as the supreme spiritual entity known by the names of *Brahman*, *Ishvara*, God[17].

According to the Ayurveda, the psycho-physical pathological conditions appear every time this order (which perfectly regulates body and mind) is somehow disturbed; or every time the individual, confused and devoid of deep awareness, utilizes body and mind in an improper, unnatural, or disharmonious manner, not programmed in the original plan. Any kind of disease of body and mind develops when there is some infringement to the cosmic order, to which body and mind belong and contribute as well.

Hindovedic psychology explains therefore that the final overcoming of psychic pathologies, conditionings, complexes and negative emotions, such as fear, depression, anxiety, dissatisfaction or anger, cannot be separated from the development of a global self awareness, including the consciousness of the original spiritual individuality of the living entity (*nitya svarupa*) and its integration with the cosmic reality.

Without re-harmonizing the individual being with the supreme Being, the individual mind with the Cosmic Mind, the finite intelligence with the Infinite Intelligence, we cannot attain a perception of the self and the world that is correct and including all the anthropologic and existential components: the physical, the psychic and the metaphysic. The dynamic and harmonic integration of these three dimensions of being is a fundamental prerequisite to re-establish a global state of health at all levels.

In the Hindovedic traditional understanding, the study of the mind cannot be separated from the study of the self[18];

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[17] See *Bhagavata Purana* III.5.23: "The glorious Lord, Master of all living entities, existed before the creation as the only Principle. Only for His will the creation is manifested, and at the end it is withdrawn in Him. This supreme Being is known with different names".

[18] It is interesting to note that in the Western tradition the term *psychology* originally meant 'science of the soul' (from the Greek *psykhé* 'soul', related to *psykho* 'breathe, blow').

in facts the psychic component and even the physical component can only be effectively and permanently healed in the context of the development of a deep awareness or spiritual consciousness.

Vedic literature and many experiences of life demonstrate that the discipline of *Yoga* not only stops the degenerative processes, but even begins the regeneration and the healing process. *Yoga* and *Ayurveda* teach that healing is started by the individual himself, therefore they encourage the active participation of the patient, whose willing cooperation, behavior and positive attitude are essential. The pharmacologic treatment is used only in extreme cases, as it has frequent and unwanted collateral effects.

The science of *Yoga*, especially when united with devotion (*bhakti*), enables one to re-establish the balance between thought and feeling, between extroverted and introverted functions, allowing the healing even in case of serious behavioral distortions. Thus the individual gradually attains the awareness of his own ontologic nature and re-establishes a proper perception and relationship with the surrounding reality, extirpating the very reason of any action meant to damage the environment, the people, and above all oneself. When the motives produced by a mistaken self-perception disappear, we experience a deep transformation that dissolves the criminal character and other serious disturbances of the personality, which are otherwise inexplicable.

Also the two universal character types, defined by Nietzsche as *Apollinian* and *Dionysian*, with their correspondent psychological states of *dream* and *frenzy*, can, through the *Yoga* practices, perfect their own personalities to the point of reaching the highest level of self realization.

According to the *Vaishnava Vedanta* the various forms of psychological conditioning and the consequent sufferings, diseases, anxieties, failures, are not inevitable. In facts, neither the physical body nor the mental body constitute the real identity of the being; they are instruments

that are meant to be used by the self, and not necessarily his shackles.

Through his body and mind, the individual can have *positive* experiences in the world, experiences that can help his psychic evolution and the return to a pefect state of health.

The Ayurvedic psychological therapy can treat even serious psychic pathologies, often considered incurable by mainstream medical science that is based on the Cartesio-Netwonian paradigm. In facts, unlike the latter, the former is based on knowing that actually the person is not the mind, nor the ego or the flow of desires, emotions or psyco-physical changes which constitute his present condition. As a spiritual being, no individual is bound forever in his physical body or permanently limited by his own personality or contigent situation, or extinguished with the death of the body[19].

Treatment of the being on all anthropological levels, including the level of the spiritual self, rarely considered in therapies practiced by mainstream medicine, allows the individual to gradually recover awareness of his own deep individality, which remains always unaltered even in case of serious pathologies of the body-mind system, as it is ontologically characterized by an intrinsic harmony and well being, transcending time and space.

Even in a case where the treatment wasn't completely successful due to the seriousness of the initial condition, it can continue to produce effects in the subsequent life or lives. In this sense the soul's immortality and transmigration constitute a concrete and satisfying answer to many existential questions.

[19] See *Bhagavadgita* II.20: "For the soul there is neither birth nor death. Living, he never ceases to exist. He does not take birth or die, he is eternal, primeval, he never had a beginning and he will never have an end. He does not die when the body dies." See also *Bhagavata Purana,* III.26.16: "The influence of the supreme *Purusha* is perceived through the time factor, awakening the fear of death in the being who has come in contact with Nature and who is confused by the false ego [*ahamkara*]".

Spiritual health, or the awareness of one's own original identity, generates health on all other levels: intellectual, mental, physical, social, economic, by illuminating all dark corners of the mind and developing the personality at its best.

II. Philosophical basis of Indian Psychology

Indian Psychology is embedded in *Indian Philosophy*, and therefore it stands on the strong foundations of deep and everlasting fundamental truths regarding the nature of reality, the ultimate goal of human endeavour and such problems that have been baffling human mind. No aspect of humanlife and the universe has been left unexamined by Indian Philosophers, and this leads to a totality of vision in both philosophical and psychological fields. Philosophy in India has been named *darshana*, which means 'vision, insight, intuition' and thus the word itself signifies that Indian philosophers pursued the quest of having a total vision of life and the universe, based on personal experience,[20] and not only on a limited plane of modern methodology. The insight of Indian philosophers fromthe time of *Upanishads* reigns still supreme and marvellous. No wonder if it had a deep and abiding influence on a number of Western philosophers like Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860), Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) and others.

With a faculty of intuition (over and above reason), the Indian philosophers looked at the cosmos as a whole, and arrived at a number of generalisations such as the following:

- The existence of supreme consciousness as the source of all that constitutes the universe,

[20] In this case we speak of *anubhava*, the experience of realization, transcending the limits of sense perception and happening through mystic intuition.

designated by the word *Brahman*, *Ishvara* or *Purushottama*.

- The esistence of soul, *atman* (or *purusha* of *Samkhya* philosophy), immortal spiritual spark, as the essence of human personality.
- The eternal relationship between the individual soul (*atman*) and the cosmic Soul (*Paramatma*).
- The evolution of the universe from *Brahman* (Supreme Consciousness) and the nature of the universe as a combination of matter on the one hand and various degrees of consciousness on the other, resulting in conglomeration of matter and spirit, with its diverse forms of life.
- The Law of Karma and transmigration of soul.
- The ethical basis of human life (*dharma*) and the doctrine of release (*moksha*) as the ultimate goal of human life.

Indian Psychology directly follows the above generalisations as fundamental postulates, assimilates these, and developes on the following fundamental assumptions:

1. The essence of human personality is *atman*, the Self, which is different from body or mind, and which governs these. Atman of Self is of the nature of Pure Consciousness, and it enlightens both mind and body, and gives life to these. It is totally different from matter (*prakriti*), which on the other hand constitutes all the material elements, including the mind and the intelligence.
2. The essence of the entire universe is cosmic Consciousness, which totally pervades it, animating all organic and non-organic matter. The *atman*, or individual consciousness, is directly related to it. In facts, we will see how macrocosm and microcosm are interconnected and interdependent; we have already

explained how fundamental is their harmony for the complete health of the individual.

3. According to the philosophy of *Vishishta Advaita* (Ramanuja's school), the Universe is the body of *Brahman*. Human body and mind follows the same principle. Both are governed by soul. Corresponding to individal body (*sharira*), individual mind (*manas*), individual intelligence (*buddhi*) and individual self (*atman*), there is the Cosmic Body or the physical universe (*virat*), the Cosmic Mind (*hiranyagarbha*), the Cosmic Intelligence (*mahat*) and the Cosmic Self (*Brahman*).

As explained in Samkhya philosophy, the difference in degrees of life in lower organism and higher organism is merely due to the degrees in the quantum of consciousness and its threefold nature or *guna* (*sattvika, rajasika* or *tamasika*).

The scope of Indian Psychology, therefore, is the entire life pervading the physical atom, the amoeba, the vegetable kingdom, and the animal kingdom. From the point of view of Indian philosophy, even an atom possesses consciousness, but it is characterised by inertia (*tamas*). We may make a deeper study of consciousness in man, because we are concerned about it, but we cannot shut our eyes towards the eternal truth that consciousness governs all creatures and the entire universe.

Different philosophical schools of India have elaborated different theories on the relationship between matter and consciousness (*prakriti* and *purusha*).

The *Upanishads* declare that all this world is *Brahman* (*sarvam khalu idam Brahman*). *Samkhya* philosophy declares independent existence of matter, but accepts the non-consciousness of the same, and proclaims that all life is the product of *prakriti* and *purusha*. *Vedanta* philosophy (leaving aside *Advaita*), believes that the relation between matter and

> consciousness is that of adjective and substantive, or body and soul, owned and owner, heat and fire, colour and object, etc. The *Advaita* school denies the existence of mater apart from consciousness. Barring *Advaita* and *Mahayana Buddhism*, all schools of Indian philosophy affirm the existence of the universe. Nevertheless, it has been declared unequivocally that consciousness reigns supreme.
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> The subject of Indian psychology is, therefore, consciousness proper, that is the be-all and end-all of all life and thought. The philosophical discussion about the minute details regarding the mutual relation of individual consciousness and cosmic consciousness is not so important from the psychological point of view. The relation exists, and it is a psychological truth for us. It is on this assumption that Indian psychology ventures to enter into the so-called mystical realms of superconscious, - a topic beyond the scope of Western psychology.

I would like to specify my opinion about the definition “Western psychology” and “Western psychologists” used by prof. Safaya in his book: it would be more precise and correct to apply them to the mainstream scientific community still anchored to the Cartesio-newtonian paradigm, and not to the numerous individual researchers and schools that have already overcome the limitations of such vision.

> Another epistemological assumption is the nature of knowledge and its valid sources. Indian psychology, in the wake of Indian philosophy, classifies knowledge into three types: the direct cognition (*pratyaksha*), inference (*paroksha*) and intuition (*aparoksha*). Hence Indian psychology does not regard that there is any mystery in intuition, telephathy or extra sensory perception (ESP).
>
> The above facts regarding the philosophical basis of Indian psychology have been mentioned to clarify the point that Indian psychology has altogether a

different foundation from that of Western psychology. Here some readers may have sincere dobt regarding even the existence of anything like Indian psychology, because whenever we read anything about psychology, it is the Western psychology.

But the facts mentioned in the following pages vouchsafe the fact that Indian psychology not only exists, but surpasses Western psychology in scope, methodology and validity of conclusions. It solves a number of problems concerning psychology, which remain unsolved in the West. After a full understanding of Indian psychology, the Western mind if not accepting the total superiority of Indian psychology, shall have to make this much concession of accepting that Indian psychology is complementary (not supplementary) to Western psychology and that synthesis of both is at once necessary.

He will agree with Edgar Sheffield Brightman in saying, "The West cannot afford to neglect the gifts which wisemen from the East may bring"[21], or with Gordon W. Allport of Harvard University, who mentioning some questions of curiosity regarding meditation and mental discipline of Indians declares, "Ignorance of Eastern thought leads us to give callow and mischievous answers to such questions as these."[22].

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[21] Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, P.XIII.
[22] Ibid, P.IX.

III. Peculiarities of Indian Psychology

Psychology is the science of consciousness, and its scope is the study of consciousness which pervades the entire universe, from the invisible atom to the man, the highest of the living organisms [on this planet]. The Ultimate Reality according to majority of the Indian philosophical systems is pure Consciousness. Individual consciousness is directly related to it like spark and fire, wave and ocean etc.

As we have already mentioned, Indian psychology is embedded in Indian philosophy. Let us examine now the main philosophical doctrines.

1. The Ethical Principle of Life

Upanishads emphasise the purity of character as the basis of higher life and self-realization.

Il *Samkhya* mentions threefold misery[23] in the world and that the final means of deliberance from it is unattachment, understanding and discrimination.

Yoga mentions *pancaklesha*, the fivefold misery and emphasises *yama* and *niyama* as the first preliminary steps for spiritual progress.

Shankara talks of fourfold qualities necessary for a spiritual aspirant e.g. *viraga*, *viveka, sadhana-sampat* and *mumukshatva*[24]. The third quality, *sadhana-sampat*, includes the ethical principles emphasised by *Patanjali*, *Buddha* and *Mahavira*.

Ethics of all the Indian Philosophers have been almost identical. Pure ethical life is the foundation of spiritual progress.

In the traditional Hindovedic perspective, the notions of ethics and the concepts of good and evil are not

[23] According to the *Samkhya*, there are three main sources of suffering: *adhibhautika*, *adhidevika* and *adhyatmika*.
[24] *Viraga*: absence of attachment; *viveka*: power of discrimination; *sadhana-sampat*: osservanza del *sadhana* o disciplina spirituale; *mumukshatva*: desire to attain liberation from the conditionings of embodied existence.

interpreted in a moralistic sense, but according to much wider considerations.

Accordingly the order which rules the universe, the precise physical laws that can be deducted from the observation and study of the various natural phenomena, acts not only externally, in the elements of nature, but also internally, within each embodied living entity, within the individual mind and consciousness. Therefore, we have not only physical laws, but also laws which we could define as "ethical" or "moral" that regulate the inner universe (the microcosm) and are generally indicated by the word *dharma* (duty, justice, law, virtue, etc.) or also *sva-dharma* (specific duty of each individual according to his position in society, to his qualities and tendencies).

Both the physical and the ethical laws express one universal order that has a divine origin, defined as *ritam* (law, established order, truth). When the living entity violates the ethical laws he disturbs the harmony and order which previously existed in himself, in his relationships with others, with the surrounding environment and with the Cosmic Consciousness, which is in facts the very origin of ethics and therefore it is considered a factor of spiritual nature. This disturbance of harmony causes the manifestation of "unnatural" and pathologic condition that are contrary to the original ontologic position of the being. Gradually such an individual falls victim to conflicts (internal and external), imbalances, confusion, afflictions and diseases (psycological and physical). In this context, we could define ethics as the "science of proper action", to indicate the behavior that is necessary to re-establish the lost harmony and the reintegration of the being on all the anthropological levels.

2. The Law of *Karma*

According to Vedic cosmogony, the phenomenal universe is ruled by the law of cause and effect, which acts not only on physical objects, but also on the subtlest phenomena of the psychic world. In facts this law, defined as the Law of *Karma*, states that every action - positive or negative - invokes a similar reaction that acts on the subject himself, life after life. Therefore the law of *karma* or infallible remuneration of actions, direct the transmigration of the ontologically immortal spiritual being from one body to another, and determines the conditions of his successive birth[25], *forma mentis* and future life.

> *Upanishad* declare the Law of *Karma* as an eternal law. *Samkhya* affirms it. *Nyaya* reiterates the same with a little modification. It mentions that the birth of a child depends upon the *karma* of the parent and of the soul[26]. The conjuction of the seeds is only a secondary cause. Karmic residues continue from birth to birth. man is free from the cycle of births and deaths (*samsara*) only at the cessation of *karma*.
>
> The three-fold division of *karma* into *prarabdha, sancita* and *agami* has been explained by *Vedanta.* The concepts of *karmashaya* (seat of *karma*) e *alayavijnana* (seat of awareness) are the contribution of *Yoga* and *Bauddha* respectively. Details about the process and fructification of *karma* have been given by *Bhagavata, Yoga* and *Jaina* systems.

[25] In a matrix (*yoni*) which can be vegetable, animal or human.

[26] We clarify that the *karma* of the parents does not affect the children: each individual receives the consequences of the actions that he has personally started, and certainly cannot be responsible for the consequences of actions performed by others. Both the hereditary and environmental factors, which determine the psycho-physical characteristics of the embodied being, are a direct consequences of the individual *karma*.

3. *Samskara*

> The theory of *samskara* is a corollary of the Law of *karma*. The nature of the next birth is determined by the *karma* of the individual. During the samsaric journey, the soul retains with him the subtle body consisting of *prana, manas,* the past *karma* and *ahamkara.* The *karmas* contain the past impressions of experience in the previous birth [or births]. These past impressions (*samskaras*) determine the direction of the *jiva* in the present life. This is explained in *Upanishads*.

According to the *Ayurveda*, the nature of the *samskaras* determines the structure of *citta*, that area of the psyche that can be identified with the notion of subconscious, recently elaborated in the West[27] but already widely known in ancient India.

The impressions perceived through the sense organs penetrate the external mind (*manas*), the intermediate mind (*buddhi*), and then get into the deep mind (*citta*), which is inaccessible by the conscious ego, creating so many tracks or "grooves" in the psyche, called *samskaras*. The *samskaras* are dormant residues or traces of memory that originate the tendencies and automatic reactions of the mind. They are extremely difficult to uproot because they originate at the subconscious level.

> *Nyaya* talks of three kinds of *samskara,* viz. *vega* (velocity), *bhavana* (those *samskara* that allow to remember and recognize things) and *sthitisthapaka* (elasticity). *Yoga* describes two types of *samskaras*: the individual tendencies (*vasana)* and good or bad actions (*dharma-adharma)*. The seat of *samskaras* is called *karmashaya,* and it results in *karmavipaka* or 'the fruit of action', which determines the nature of the next birth (*jati*), especially the family in which one is destined to

[27] Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), founder of modern psycho-analysis, has the merit of having been the first in the West to elaborate the concept of subconscious.

be born, the longevity (*ayu*) and the pleasures of life (*bhoga*). The goal of *Yoga* is the destruction of the *karmashaya*.

4. Liberation

The ultimate goal of life according to all the Indian philosophies is liberation, self realization, *moksha* or *kaivalya.*

The *Vedas* prescribe four objectives (*catur purushartha*) that a man should harmoniously pursue during his earthy life: *dharma* (justice, religiosity), *artha* (realization of one's own personal aspiration), *kama* (satisfaction of the senses) and *moksha* (liberation from conditionings and from the sufferings of the embodied existence). Beyond *moksha*, the tradition of *Vaishnava Bhakti*, and particularly the school of Chaitanya mention a fifth *purushartha* or *param purushartha* considered as the final purpose of the existence: *prema* or love for God - Vishnu or Krishna[28]. Obviously, *moksha* always remains a decisive and essential stage on the spiritual journey, but according to this school it does not represent the final goal in itself: *moksha* marks the end of the material conditioning, but it is just the beginning of real life.

Moksha is the state of destruction of bondage, cessation of transmigration, annihilation of *karma* is annihilated, destruction of the subtle body. It is the lifting of the veil of ignorance (according to the *Advaita* school); release from three-fold misery (according to the *Samkhya)* or fivefold *klesha* (according to *Yoga*); understanding the true nature of the Self and attaining the state of Superconsciousness.

Knowledge of psychology must lead to the understandnig of the true nature of the Self, and hence the principle of liberation is a part of the subject-matter of Indian psychology.

[28] See *Bhagavadgita* XVIII.54.

The circumstances when final release takes place have been mentioned in *Nyaya*[29].

The *Vishishta-advaita* emphasises devotion (*bhakti*) through *Karma-yoga* and *Jnana-yoga*, selfless action called *nishkama karma*, the moral and spiritual effort (*sadhana*), and self surrender to the Lord and His divine Grace.

Release is possible through true knowledge of the defects like pain, birth, selfish activity and ignorance[30].

Samkhya states that release takes place automatically when the *dance* of *prakriti* ceases before the *purusha*, and *purusha* detaches himself from *prakriti*. There is an urge for eternal happiness and eternal existence in the human mind[31]. Indian philosophy leads to that goal.

5. Methods for Liberation

The means of liberations have been mentioned in all the philosophies. *Upanishads* emphasise knowledge of the true nature of the self. *Samkhya* emphasises the discrimination (*viveka)* and knowledge of the true nature of *prakriti*; *Nyaya* emphasises the need to elevate oneself through purification of the self, withdrawal from the sense objects, concentration and meditation. The *Advaita* school emphasises *Jnana-yoga* or the path of knowledge; *Ramanuja* emphasises *Bhakti-yoga* while *Patanjali* emphasises *Raja-yoga*; *Buddhismo* emphasises high ethical life. *Jainismo* emphasises ethics and meditation (like that of *Yoga*).

Each philosophical system has given deails about the divergent means for liberation. This topic has been beautifully summarised by Swami Vivekananda,

[29]*Nyaya-varttika* by Udyotkara, III. 2.60.
[30]*Nyaya-sutra* by Gautama, I.1.2.
[31] Precisely because, as we have seen, the ontological qualities of *atman* are: immortality (*sat*), knowledge/awareness (*cit*) and bliss (*ananda*). These isues are shared by all spiritual beings, independently from the psycho-physical body (human, animal or vegetable) where he is currently encaged.

> "Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest the divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal[32]. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, philosophy, by one, or more, or all of these -- and be free".

[32] Here Vivekananda Svami probably refers to the gross and suble matter, or body and psyche.

IV. Interaction Between Body and Mind

Since he is made of two energies, the material (*prakriti*) and the spiritual (*purusha*), the human being is a paradox by deep inner aspirations that conflict with demanding physical needs. The difference between the self and the body temporarily inhabited by the self, must therefore become a deep and constant awareness because when the individual identifies with what he is not, the inner universe seems to crumble apart and the individual is forced to suffer his inner failure.

Thus the first awareness must be the consciousness of the essential difference between spirit and matter, between the self and the body, both gross and subtle[33]. Of course this does not mean that the body and Nature, with all their elements, should be neglected or despised; on the contrary they must be valued and cared for in the best way, as they are valuable instruments that can enable one to travel comfortably in this existence and proceed upwards, towards the knowledge, overcoming the waves of the ocean of births and deaths.

Immediately after this, one must become aware of the deep connections and inter-dependence of body and psyche, because whatever happens on the physical level influences the psychic level, and even more so, whatever happens on the psychic level greatly influences the physical. Almost all the bodily diseases, in fact, derive from diseases or disturbances in the mind. Science seems to have finally demonstrated that, for example, stress has a great importance even in serious pathologies like tumors, cardio-circulatory diseases or premature aging. What to speak of the diseases called of hysterical origin, where there are no visible dysfunctions of organic nature, and where the pathogenesis is solely attributed to psychic disorders.

Indian literature on psychology teaches that every organ, tissue, cell, molecule and atom in the body is

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33 See *Bhagavadgita* XIII.33: “Just like ether, for its suble nature, cannot mix with anything in spite of being extended everywhere, in the same way the self [*atman*] never mixes with the body, although situated in it”.

pervaded by the psyche, and that the cerebro-spinal nervous system represents the main physiological channel through which consciousness works in the body, although the influence of "thinking" and "feeling" is not limited to it.

If the individual maintains positive or elevated thoughts, based on values like truthfulness, loyalty or compassion, the entire system, through electro-chemical impulses associated to each thought (the so-called messenger cells) receives those same positive stimulation, that cause an immediate strengthening of the immune system. On the other hand, the immune system becomes weaker in the presence of negative thoughts or emotions like fear, resentment, anger, lust, hate, moroseness, envy, disappointment, etc.

According to the *Ayurveda*, the physical state of an individual changes with his psychic contents and his state of consciousness. In this way we can explain also the so-called miracle healing or, in the medical language, the spontaneous remissions. Similarly, whatever happens in the body inevitably influences the psychic structure, too, so that it is evident that body and mind are not simply connected, but there is even *resonance* between the two.

Even breathing, which can be compared to a hinge between the physical and the psychic platform, confirms that these two are indissolubly connected, interacting and interdependent. In fact through breathing we can influence the psychic process and by working on the pshychic platform, we can influence the physical. Neuralgies, rheumatic pains, cramps, sweating, exhaustion and other organic discomforts can be overcome through the practice of breath control (*pranayama*), a branch of *Yoga* we will examine while studying the *Yoga-sutras*[34]. On the psychic side anxiety, fear, emotion and dizziness can be controlled and healed through a proper management of breathing. This practice calms down the mind and the consciousness can access to a higher level of awareness through meditation.

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[34] See the syllabus *Psychology in Classical Yoga.*

Some people may find it difficult to understand how a mental image can affect physiologic functions, even going so far as to stop such serious diseases like incurable tumors. Yet, according to modern sub-atomic physics, within the human brain the memorized image of an object can impact the senses as much as the object itself. In facts imagination is already the creation of a form, because it implicitly possesses in itself all the necessary parameters to implement it[35].

In a sense, these recent scientific acquisitions confirm the viewpoint of Vedic tradition, which explains that the genesis of action is identified to be the desire that generates the thought, which possesses an enormous creative force in itself. If this creative force is allowed to flow correctly, it manifests its full potential moving from the subtle to the gross level - even modifying the reality of objects.

Thus imagination and reality, thought and action are fundamentally inseparable; we should not be surprised to learn that images present in the mind can finally manifest as physical reality. In other words, our bodies do not correspond to reality, but to what we imagine as real. The placebo effect is an evident demonstration of how psyche and body constantly interact and are too interconnected to be treated as separate realities.

According to Bohm, the mind-body system is not fundamentally capable to distinguish the difference between the neuronal holograms used by the brain to experience reality, and those evoked by the brain while imagining reality. In all cases the elements which will form the neuronal holograms are many, and very subtle. For example, they are very much influenced by hopes and fears, prejudice and individual beliefs.

According to the quality of its contents, imagination can therefore create diseases or heal them. To actuate this latter beneficial potential it is absolutely necessary to follow a mental discipline that will enable the individual to control his own psychic activities. Otherwise the physician may

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[35] See Michael Talbot, *Tutto è uno*, ed. URRA, 1997, p. 103.

resort to using a placebo to trick the patient into tapping into these internal healing forces himself. In this sense the importance of *Yoga* is certainly fundamental, because it teaches the discipline for the perfect control of the mind, and the full and correct utilization of all its endless potentials, which can bring enormous benefits to all the existential platforms, including the physical platform. In fact, when we penetrate higher levels of consciousness, the power of the mind can even prevail over genetic traits. Of course, the deeper the awareness, the greater the changes that we will be able to implement, both within our bodies and in the reality around us.

The human being therefore lives in a universe where even one single change of attitude or thought pattern can determine the difference between life and death, between health and disease. Thus things are so subtly interconnected that even a dream or an image can be brought into reality. As Saint Augustine stated, miracles happen not in opposition to nature, but in opposition to what we know about nature.

In the end, body and mind represent two levels that are only apparently distinct, just like matter and energy. Whatever is physical, as taught by the *Vedas* and confirmed by some important researchers in modern physics, it nothing more than crystallized mental energy.

In fact, the new discoveries of quantum physics demonstrate that, by dividing matter into its smallest particles, we may observe that such elementary particles, minuscules granules of energy, cease to possess the characteristics of physical reality as we commonly understand it. Today's scientists are convinced that sub-atomic phenomena should not be classified as waves or particles, but as a category which in some way unites both of the two. These elements are called *quanta* and physicists believe that they are the fundamental substance which makes up the entire universe.

It is particularly interesting to note the overwhelming evidence that the only time when the *quanta* are manifested is when there is a conscious observer[36].

Once again, these are evident and significant analogies with Vedic thought, which explains that the entire universe is simply the materialization of a thought expressed by the universal Mind. Furthermore, according to Puranic cosmogony, matter leaves its non-manifested and non-differentiated state (*pradhana*) when the *Purusha*, the supreme Being, turns His glance on it[37]. Isaac Newton, too, stated that the force of gravity, like all the other laws governing the universe, results from a divine thought. As far as the relationship between matter (mass) and energy, Einstein's equation is extremely well known.

In the medical science of *Ayurveda*, the psychological and physiological aspects, being so strictly connected, are not treated separately, but studied and treated together. This is because the state of health can be effectively re-established with lasting and completely satisfying results, only when a wholistic treatment takes into consideration all of the different aspects of that micro universe known as the human being: the physical, mental, and spiritual. As we have seen, modern scientific research demonstrates that the human psyche is essentially proportioned to the entire universe and to the totality of existence.

The physical and psychic bodies, or the body-mind system, must be harmonized because a non-harmonic mind in relationship to the body, or a non-harmonic body in relationship to the mind generate disease and infirmity and eventually suffering and despair. Nothing is more powerful on the body that the mind's beliefs. Harmony gives us a taste of liberation and is the key to re-establishing complete health by reclaiming one's own inexhaustible reserve of energies, an essential requirement for climbing the peaks of the highest awareness - spiritual consciousness.

According to the principles of *Bhakti*, the perfection of life consists in keeping mind and body engaged in service

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[36] See Michael Talbot, *Tutto è uno.* URRA, 1997, pp. 46-7.
[37] See *Bhagavata Purana* I. 3.1-2.

to God[38]. The sages-seers state that one who loves the Divine keeps the the physical and the psychic spheres in perfect balance, so that rather than creating conflict with each other, they become useful instruments for the work of the self.

The Hindovedic science of psychology describes methods and therapies to recover psycho-physical health, not as a goal in itself, but rather as a means for attaining the ultimate purpose of existence: spiritual realization, which is indispensable in order to completely develop one's own personality and attain the state of complete inner satisfaction.

[38] In *Bhaktirasamritasindhu,* a fundamental text of the *Vaishnava Bhakti* tradition, it is stated: *hrishikena hrishikesha sevanam bhaktir ucyate*: "*Bhakti* means engaging all our senses in the service to God, the Master of the senses."[I.1.12].

V. Levels of the mind, and the realm of feeling

Often the psychic energies, that are potentially unlimited, remain unutilized, imprisoned like shackled Titans, due to inhibitions and "complexes", which gradually deprive the individual of his life force and even prevent his reactions to internal and external stimulations. Sometimes they escape from his control, creating alienating phenomena which develop into chronic pathologies, which can evolve into factual madness.

According to the description of the *Yoga-sutras*, we can imagine the mind as a building having various floors. The three levels of the psychic structure are: the superficial or external mind (*manas*) as a seat of extroverted functions, and which collects datas coming from the outside through the senses; the intermediate mind or intellect (*buddhi*) that is the seat of elaboration and evaluation of the datas collected through *manas*; and the deep psyche or subconscious (*citta*), the fundamental psychic archive that determines the configuration of the mind structure and the level of consciousness of the individual.

Although *citta* appears as the closest to the self, compared to the external or intermediate mind, it also belongs to the material platform and it is produced by the *ahamkara*, conditioned consciousness. Continuining in our studies we will notice that ancient Indian civilization has produced an immense and invaluable heritage of deep psychology, both theoretical and practical, anticipating by thousands of years the most noted Western researchers who have worked in this field.

The Hindovedic psychological sciences teach how to study and know the mind in its entirety, on all its levels: from the highest floors down to the cellars of consciousness. These deepest layers are inexplored dark dungeons that usually remain unknown to the conscious self, although they decisively influence the structure of the conscious mind field by determining in the individual the perception of himself, others and the world around him.

The mind should not be considered as a merely abstract concept but rather as an object, a powerful energetic field that can affect the life of the individual in a more or less positive manner, according to the type of impressions it takes in as its food. The mental apparatus is constantly functioning and keeps imposing its patterns and pre-concepts, not only during the waking hours but during sleep as well, through the phenomenon of dreaming: in facts, *manas* is the screen on which we project not only the psychic currents and the images created from the objects in the external world, but also those that come from the inner world of the individual, from the deep areas of conscious and subconscious.

The healing, purification and control of the psyche, together with the harmonization of the different levels of consciousness, are absolutely required to the development and the well being of the individual and finally, through the exercise of spiritual practices, to reach the vision of the ultimate reality.

Indian Yoga literature teaches one how to become aware of the different dimensions of existence and of the connections between them that make them interdependent and interacting. Just like the knowledge of the world cannot be considered complete without considering all the dimensions of the reality, in the same way the health of an individual cannot be described as complete health if it does not take into account all of the being in his entirety, that is, if it does not stem from an harmonious relationship of the individual with all his anthropological issues.

To heal and to manage the "sphere of feeling"; to direct in the proper direction willpower and the different intellectual and sentimental faculties like thought, memory, feelings, imagination, dream and desire: this is a very delicate and urgent task, if we want to achieve a complete state of well being.

People tend to passively accept the feelings and the mind states that develop in response to the stimulations they receive. Sometimes these feelings seem positive, constructive, directed to one's own benefit and to the benefit

of others; at other times they are exactly the opposite, and become the cause of suffering, dis-harmony, conflict, and anxiety, but they tend to prevail in spite of all efforts when the individual tries to avoid them.

In facts, emotions are generally very difficult to manage and control, much more difficult than thoughts. This is because emotions are rooted in the subconscious level, while thought - a psychic impulse that has come to the conscious level and has already gone through a rationalization process - is more easily managed by the conscious ego.

Hindovedic psychology offers efficient therapeutic techniques, that can influence the deepest area of the psyche - the very seat of the *samskaras*, the remote causes of character and conscious behavior.

The *waters* of the psyche are never the same: sometimes they are calm and reliable, but in a moment they can become agitated and treacherous. The great majority of the individuals are totally helpless in these *waters*: dragged by the various currents and constantly tossed around by the psychic waves or *vrittis*, described in the classical *Yoga* of Patanjali, and in *Bhagavadgita*.

The individuals are subjected to a constant bombing of suggestions and impressions. In the best situation a person can only choose what impression or suggestion they want to be exposed to. By living in a distracted way, one's mind will drive them hither and thither, making them slaves of crazy and nonsensical projects, because the mind works like a receiver-transmitter, broadcasting the impressions it has received and used as a food.

Thus we have the duty to select with great care not only the food for our body, but the food for our mind as well, because whatever we allow to filter into our psychic apparatus gives an *imprinting* and a perspective to our life, which can be given up only with great difficulty. Release will be possible only by modifying the impressions and suggestions.

For this reason, *Ayurveda* recognizes the decisive role that prevention plays. To combat the risk of neurosis or

psychosis we may just need to apply some simple but essential precautions, but once they have manifested the treatment of such diseases has much higher costs in terms of energy, time, dedication and suffering. Therefore it is extremely important to prevent and treat conditions even before the first signs of psychic failure (as in the case of daily micro-neurosis), without allowing them to become full-blown pathologies.

The spiritual discipline of *Yoga*, especially on the path of *Bhakti*, enables us to develop an accurate understanding of ourselves and the world, which in turn supports the proper management of thoughts, desires and emotions. In this way the mind apparatus and the feelings cease to be places of chaos and suffering, torn by contrasting tendencies, and become like peaceful sanctuaries where the various voices of the personality, resulting from the different anthropologic issues, vibrate in harmony. Genuine spiritual progress does not imply removal of anything, but rather allows the surfacing on the conscious level of all the potentialities and tendencies of the individual, both extroverted and introverted, developed in full harmony with the original identity of the being.

In the practice of *Bhakti* the needs of culture and nature both exist. Someone, following his own inclination, will give greater importance to the intellect, putting it to the service of the feeling; another will act in the opposite way, giving feeling precedence over the intellect. But when correctly practiced, *Bhakti* can satisfy the various individual issues, harmonizing them among themselves, allowing the re-integration of the individual consciousness in the Cosmic Self.

VI. Epistemology of Indian Psychology

As we have seen, Indian psychology is an off-shoot of Indian philosophy. The very subject matter of Indian philosophy, viz. Consciousness, leads to metaphisics and cannot be divorced from it. The problems regarding nature of consciousness, the scope of consciousness in the universe, the functioning of consciousness, the agencies of consciousnes (mind and body) and the results of consciousness are metaphysical and epistemological problems. Hence these problems are solved by philosophers. The method of philosophy is experience and reason supplemented by intuition. Indian philosophers have accepted:

(1) experience and observation (*pratyaksha*);

(2) reasoning (*anumana, upamana, tarka*);

(3) intuition os testimony *(shabda)*.

Upanishads mention these methods, and *Samkhya* endorses the same.

These are three *pramanas* used by the *pramatr* (the knower), leading to *prama* (knowledge).

Nyaya declares the supremacy of *pratyaksha* over other means of valid knowledge. Whatever is known through other methods must be verifiable by other means.

Mimamsa refuses to accept the validity of intuition. But the other philosophical systems (*Vedanta, Yoga, Buddhismo* and *Jaina*) give all supremacy to intuition. *Advaita* talks of *parmarthika satta* as the highest reality, which is related to intuition and superconsciousness, and he makes observation subservient to intuition, as it hs only *vyavaharika satta* (empirical reality). The empirical experience based on experience is sublated by superconscious eperience. *Yoga* states the practical methods of attaining superconscious experience, and thus obtaining the true nature of reality. *Buddhismo* emphasises the importance of enlightenment (*bodhi*). Intuitive insight (*prajna*)

represents the highest activity of the human mind. *Jainas* talk of omniscience (*sarvajnatva*), attainable when the karmic veil is removed. On the whole, except the *Carvaka* system (which is virtually non-existent)[39] and *Mimamsa Darshana*, all the schools of Indian psychology admit intuition. *Bauddha, Jaina, Yoga* and *Vedanta* give intuition the highest place. "Hindu thinkers as a class hold with great convinction that we possess a power more interior than intellect by which we become aware of the real in its ultimate individuality, and not merely in its superficial or discernible aspects"[40]. It does not mean that intellect is denied. Intuition presents truth of first order, and reason and experience presents truth of the second order. There is no antithesis between the two. Reason is to be supplemented by intuition. Hence the hierarchy of philosophical method is intuition (*aparoksha*), reason (*paroksha*) and observation (*pratyaksha*)[41]. Some Western philosophers (e.g. Bergson[42], Croce[43]) also admit this hierarchy. The intuitional or the introspectional method is the most suitable method for psychology, for it helps the study of the total mind instead of its different functions separately. One who experiences *samadhi* knows the total mind, and obtains the non-mediate (*aparoksha*) knowledge. He listens to the voice from within and realizes his self. He sees the development of his own mind and thereby understands the working of the mind of other people.

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[39] Because this system of thought has not left almost any text.

[40] Radhakrishnan S., *An Idealist View of Life*, p.127.

[41] According to the Western viewpoint, they correspond to syntheis and deduction (Indian theoretic) and analysis (but only for the pleasure of verification), which cover a journey that is proposed and practiced in reverse by the so-called Western scientific method. However, such method can rarely succeed to reach the finish line of synthesis and therefore the effective global knowledge for man.

[42] Regarding the concept of evolution, Bergson had a vitalistic conception of reality, intended as the expression of a creative impulse, which can be perceived not by reason by only by intuition.

[43] Historian, philosopher, literary critic and politician (1866-1952). According to Croce, the purpose of philosophy is not the theoretical-speculative arrangement, but the deduction of the forms of Spirit that give a sense to history. Among the forms of Spirit (arts, philosophy, economy, ethics), arts represent the pre-logic and intuitive degree of knowledge.

The purely experimental method cannot be adequately applied to the study of the mind. Mind is something higher than nervous system. Objective method can work only at the superficial level. Intuitional method will dive deep into the waters.

Fortunately spiritual insight has been abundant in India, right from the *Upanishadic* age. It is therefore that all the philosophical systems arose out of insight (*darshana*) and are designated as such. Intuitive knowledge is beyond all proof (*pramanyan nirapeksham*). No wonder then that the chief method of Indian philosophy, and consequently of Indian psychology, is insight and introspection. In fact psychology is itself a subject of introspection. *Vyasa*'s verdict is irrefutable: "Through *Yoga* must *Yoga* be known".

The second major method of Psychology is observational and experimental. Intuition is the right method where metaphysical problems of psychology are to be solved. But where problems regarding the lower functions of consciousness such as perception, cognition, affection, volition, etc. are concerned, observation is the suitable method. It is, therefore, that *Nyaya* that deals extensively with perception makes use of observational method and assigns last place to intuition. The minute details regarding perception are based on observation. The wave-theory (of Keshava Mishra) could not be discovered by the philosopher, without taking recourse to detailed observation. There are evidences that Caraka conducted actual experimentation for finding the effect of external physical stimuli on dreams. He had discovered the rate of change of respiration during the three states, viz. wakeful, dream and deep sleep. By observing the rate of respiration he could state whether the sleeping person is in dream state or deep-sleep state. Further, he would subject the sleeping person to a definite physical stimuli, just at the moment when the sleeping person

entered dream state. The stimuli of fire-pot near the feet would cause such dreams as burning in fire. The stimuli of raising the cot and then lowering it down would cause such dreams as flying in air and falling from precipice. A stimuli like a medicine disturbing digestion would cause unpleasant dreams. Thus there is no dearth of experimentation under controlled conditions.

The generalisation regarding perception, cognition, memory, dream, deep-sleep, emotion, volition, etc. have been arrived at by Indian philosophers after collecting a huge mass of evidences. What is the basis of declaring the prophetic nature of some dreams? Evidences were collected from persons whose dreams came about to be true. There are books in India deaing with prophetic dreams, mentioning concomitant results of various events or phenomena met in dreams. The generalisations (like that of palmistry and astrology) are based on analysis of data of evidences.

In short we conclude that the chief method of Indian psychology is introspection, supplemented by observation and experimentation.

In the Vedic literature, introspection and mystical intuition are exalted as the topmost instruments to perceive the transcendent reality that is situated beyond the purview of logic and human senses. In fact, these can only perceive the most superficial layers of reality (the perception defined as *pratyaksha* is related to the psycho-physical platform, called *adhibhautika*).

This superficial level of existence and the only level perceived by the vast majority of people, has been defined by Bhom as *explicit order*, or revealed order. Below this level, there is the *implicit* or hidden order, that gives origin to all the objects and to all the appearances of the physical world[44].

[44] See Michael Talbot, *Tutto è uno*, ed. URRA, 1997, P. 62-3.

According to Bohm, the existence of a deeper order explain why reality, at sub-quantum level, becomes non-localized. Both Bohm and Pribram[45] have remarked how the experiences of the mystics through the centuries, characterized by visions of light and strong feelings of cosmic unitedness, are actually descriptions of that *implicit* order that is hidden beyond *explicit* reality.

[45] Karl Pribram, neuro surgeon and neuro psychologist, professor in various American universities and scientist in quantum physics.

VII. Western Psychology: An Historical Overview

The Western scientific approach, that is analythical-inductive, divided knowledge into many sectors, producing an impressive quantity of data on the knowledge of the objective world. This constitutes the basis of that technological progress that we all know, but through fragmentation, it risks dimming our global vision, obstructing it of its complex and interdepending weaving, of its "vitality" even. Why? Because there is a great difference between the listing of data, however wide, and the heart of a pulsating knowledge. In fact, it very often happens that someone knows everything about something, and very little or nothing about the rest; this situation can bring to a dangerous cultural situation, composed by limited units of knowledge.

In the world of Indian tradition, each branch of knowledge is connected with the others and the study of psychology, for example, in order to supply answers to the existential needs of man, cannot be separated from philosophy, and similarly philosophy cannot be separated from psychology.

> In the West the very concept of psychology has undergone a radical change. Originally meaning the Science of the Soul (derived from the Greek word *psykhé-logos*), it changed into the Science of the Mind, as in Renaissance the very existence of soul was questioned. But the problem of relation between mind and body, and between mental and physical phenomena remained an unsolved riddle. Though the problem was humorously avoided by a philosopher who said, "What is mind? -- No matter; What is matter? -- Never mind", a better attempt was made by Descartes (1596-1650) while he defined it as a science of consciousness.

The definition lost its significance when the Psychoanalysts like Freud and Adler explored the unconscious fields. The Behaviourists therefore defined it as study of behaviour, thus combining the conscious and the unconscious behaviour. Watson's Behaviourism[46], upon which this definition is based, has long been refuted by the contemporary psychologists.

If we put it humorously, first psychology in the West lost its soul, then its mind, then its consciousness an lastly all its behaviour.

It is not an exaggeration to state that there is no unanimity amongst the contemporary psychologists regarding the very subject-matter. A number of theories are rampant, and a number of schools have originated. But all the same, some of the very fundamental problems regarding our conscious or unconscious behaviour remain unsolved.

It will not be out of place to give a brief resume of the contributions of the Western philosophers down from Plato upto the present times.

1. Greek Psychology

Plato (428-347 B.C.) recognised mind or soul as an active principal working to control the body. But his "soul" was different from the "soul" of Indian philosophers.

In fact, Plato's works show some substantial differences from the vision of the Vedic *Rishis*. For example, Plato utilized the term *psykhé* to define both the soul and the mind, while Vedic literature describes the psyche as separate from the self, clarifying that the mental body and the physical body are two instruments to be utilized by the self or spiritual being.

[46] Psychologist from the United States (1878-1958), specifically known for founding the school of Behaviorism.

Furthermore Plato, judging from what has reached us, does not clarify the connection between body and soul, which on the other hand have been elaborately described by the Indian sages, especially in the *Vaisnava Vedanta.*

Nonetheless, there are remarkable similarities between Platonic and Vedic thought. Plato, too, considers the soul as the immortal principle that gives life to the body; its nature, simple and disembodied, has a divine origin. Furthermore, Plato postulates the pre-existence and separatedness of the soul in regard to the body; hence his doctrine of metempsychosis, very similar to the concept of *samsara* or the transmigration of the being.

> According to Plato, the soul had two stages of development -- the irrational stage (seated in the heart and lower body) and the rational stage seated in the head. Human behavior according to him flowed from three main sources: desire, emotion and knowledge.
>
> Aristotle (384-322 a.C.) regarded soul as the entire vital principle of organism -- plant, animal or human. A part of its power in human organism is passive and dies with the body. But the active part survives. Here he leads us to inexplicable mystery..

According to Aristotle, the soul is the substance that gives form and life to the organic body, or in other words it activates the functions that are characteristic of the body[47]. It can be distinguished as:

- the *vegetative* soul, characterized by a nutritive and reproductive power observed in all living entities, starting from the plants.
- the *sensitive* soul, which includes sensitivity and movement, characteristic of animals and man.
- the *intellective* soul, exclusively characteristic of man.

The contact point between the Aristotelian concept and the classical philosophical thought in India is the

[47] Aristotle defines this concept with the term *entelechia*, which designates the state of perfect actuation of a being in oppostion to the state of potential.

common acknowledgement of the existence of the soul - not only in the human being - but in all living species as well. Vedic philosophy, well represented in authoritative texts like *Upanishads*, *Bhagavadgita*, and *Vedanta-sutras*, does not establish different value hierarchies between the various souls: the soul is always unchangeable and it retains its nature of pure consciousness and ontological characteristics independently from the body it temporarily occupies. The limits of the psycho-physical structure will determine the degree in which the embodied being will be able to access the proper functions of the soul (the *atman* described in the *Upanishads*), which are eternal and inalienable.

Aristotle describes the processes that form the basis of the sense activities and the intellect functions. He explains that the intellect is meant to examine the images supplied by the senses and establish if they are true or false. In Indian Yogic thought, too, the intellect called *buddhi* has this key role in the complex psychic process.

Furthermore, Aristotle postulates a distinction between the *potential* and the *actual* intellects. The actual intellect actively contains all the truths, all the possible objects of intellectual perception, and transforms into action those truths which are only dormant in the potential intellect. Therefore the *actual* intellect is called *active*, and considered "separate, unmoved, unmixed" (*On the Soul*, III, 5). While the actual intellect lives forever, the *potential* or *passive* intellect ultimately becomes corrupted and it cannot develop any thought without the help of the *actual* intellellect.

> Epicureans reduced soul to matter -- very fine and mobile matter. Thus Hippocrates, the physician, considered all mental action as material Following this approach, Galen[48] (130-201) made a rudimentary attempt to study the nervous system and explained the four temperaments (Sanguine, Phlegmatic, Melancholic and Choleric).

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[48] Greek physician and philosopher. He became very famous for his studies on anatomy, physiology, pathology and therapy.

Similarly, Indian psychology describes the mind as constituted by *prakriti* or material energy, albeit of subtle nature and with different characteristics compared to the gross physical elements.

The substantial difference from the Epicurean philosophers is that the Epicureans identify the concept of soul with the concept of the mind. For them the soul is composed of *body particles* spread all over the body like a *warm breath*. These particles are subtler and more round than the others, and therefore more movable.

Epicurus explained that death, or the disgregation of the atoms composing the body, necessarily implies the death of the soul, too. Such theory is absolutely not supported by the Vedic sages, who teach that the soul is constituted of a totally different substance than what constitutes the bodies. The soul is *Brahman*, Spirit, which in facts has as inalienable characteristics: immortality, awareness and bliss.

2. Medieval Psychology

Christianity revived the doctrine of soul. St. Augustine (354-450 AD) attributed all human actions to soul -- God's creation. The three faculties -- memory, imagination and will -- ar parts of the unitary soul.

At the beginning of the *Soliloquies* (I,2), one of his early works, Augustine declares that the aim of his research is God and the soul. He believes that these two do not require two parallel or different studies: God is in fact in the soul and reveals Himself in the innermost depths of the soul itself. Therefore according to Augustine, searching God means searching the soul; and searching the soul means turning towards oneself, recognizing oneself in one's own spiritual and divine nature.

The philosophical and mystical texts of classical Indian thought also declare that the search for God coincides with the search for one's self, since the individual is integral part of the Divine[49] and participates to His same nature.

> Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274 AD) believed in the survival of soul after death. He, however, made a beginning of faculty approach. He found emotions and will subordinate to intellect.

According to Thomas Aquinas, the intellect is an essential part of the human soul, and each individual or human soul has a distinct and individual intellect.

Following the Aristotelian concept, the Tomistic doctrine states that the soul is the form of the body, the life principle which enables man to know and move; as such it is *substance*, or in other words, it subsists in itself. Being pure form, the soul is not composed of matter, and it is immortal. On the contrary, matter can become corrupt because form can separate from it. However, since it is impossible for form to separate from itself, it is impossible for the soul to become corrupt.

In controversy against the Augustinians, Thomas Aquinas does not see as a complete being either the soul alone, or the human body, but the substantial union between the two. On this doctrine are founded the Christian principles of the immortality of the soul, and the resurrection of the flesh.

[49] See *Bhagavadgita* XV.7 and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* V.1.1

On the contrary, the concept of immortality (*amrita*) of the self, amply described in Vedic literature, is solely attributed to the spiritual essence (*atman*). Matter (*prakriti*) is described as being eternal but subject to the entropic force of time (*kala*), under whose relentless impetus the bodies and the various material aggregates inexorably tend to compose and disgregate endlessly.

> The Renaissance period brought the revival of Greek learning in Europe. It is during this period that Descartes (1596-1650) presented very powerfully his theory on the existence of Self. To him all the world, and everybody is a machine; but outside the world is God, and within the body is the spiritual soul -- the Self. What is the proof of the existence of the Self? To this he replied, "Cogito ergo sum" (I think, therefore I exist). Even if you doubt, the doubt proves the existence of the doubter (*dubito ergo sum*). Here started the problem of body-self relationship, to which his solution was the "theory of interactionism".

Always in this regard, Descartes formulated the *theory of the pineal gland* (the present epiphysis): this endocrine gland, situated within the skull between the anterior quadrigeminal eminences, and connected to the encephalus through a stem, had the function to unify the feelings coming from the sense organs.

Descartes' concept is in remarkable opposition to Vedic tradition, since it identifies the subject with his psychic functions: 'I think, therefore I exist' (*cogito ergo sum*). According to the *Vaishnava Vedanta* and Yoga literature in general, the self exists irrespective of his own psychic representations: the living being has a purely spiritual nature, and the mind is nothing but an instrument that he is utilizing.

We could compare the psyche to a pair of spectacles: even if a person wears glasses, we should not remain confused and think that the person *is* his glasses; with or without them, the person still exists, and is always the same.

The only thing which may change is his perception of the world. In the same way, psychic representations do not modify or compromise in any way the ontological nature of the spiritual being; only his level of consciousness and his perception of himself and the world may change according to the quality of his mental contents, but in his deep essence, the living being will always remain the same.

> Spinoza (1632-1677) went a step beyond Descartes' theory. As a religious minded person[50], he held that body and mind are two different aspects of the same single substance -- God. He reaches nearer our Indian point of view when he propounds "man is a part of the universal whole, and his life, in thought and action, is but a fragment of the divine substance". According to him "God is the true reality and presents himself in these two fundamentally distinct ways [matter and consciousness]"[51]. Spinoza firmly proclaimed, "God is immanent, and not the extraneous cause of all things. I say, All is God; all lives and moves in God."[52].

The *Vaishnava Vedanta* as well describes God as immanent to the creation, so much so that that the supreme Consciousness pervades each atom of the universe and resides in the metaspace in the heart of each living entity. God is everywhere, but the whole does not limit God (see *Bhagavadgita* IX.4 and *Bhagavata Purana* I.5.20). The immanent and the transcendent visions integrate and harmonize perfectly: God remains transcendental to the universe, space and time, and simultaneously He is situated within them. This principle of inconceivable difference and non-difference between Creator, created and creatures, is expressed in its highest form in the *Vaishnava* school of Caitanya Mahaprabhu and is quite different from Spinoza's pantheistic conception, according to which God or Substance is nothing else than Nature, considered as

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[50] Spinoza hailed from a Jewish family.
[51] W.B.Philsbury, *History of Psychology*, p.64.
[52] Will Durant, *Story of Philosophy*, p.172.

increated, eternal, infinite and unique reality, from which all things derive and in which all things exist. Ultimately, Spinoza's Nature-God corresponds to the cosmos, to the geometrical order and the rationality of the universe, or in other words, to the global structure of the laws and of the necessary relationships between things.

> Spinoza comes nearer our Indian doctrine when he says, "the will of God is the sum of all causes and all laws, and the intellect of God is the sum of all mind."[53]. To Spinoza the mind of God is a mentality scattered over space and time. It is the diffused consciousness that animates the whole world.

Such statements remind us the concepts of individual mind and cosmic Mind, already amply analyzed in the classical *Yoga* literature and in *Bhagavadgita*.

> According to Spinoza, the mental process is one (not two) that is seen inwardly as mind and outwardly as matter.

In facts, he explains that the body is simply the external aspect of the mind, just like the mind is simply the internal aspect of the body. To make an example: in Spinoza's thought, an existential state, like an emotion, can be simultaneously expressed both in physiologic terms (speeding heart beat, trembling, changes of temperature, muscle tensions, etc) and in psychic terms (fear, pleasure, anxiety etc), as both these manifestations correspond, albeit in different forms, to the same state of consciousness.

This psycho-physical parallelism (as it has been defined) constituted a new philosophical way to represent the relationships between body and psyche. These entities are described by Spinoza as qualitatively different in nature, but connected and parallel to each other, being fundamentally composed of the same divine substance,

[53] Ibid, p.175

which is unique, eternal and unlimited. This is fully supported by the *Vaishnava Vedanta*, too.

> Neither is mind material, nor is matter mental. Thus Spinoza tries to resolve the distinction between the two. But of want of details, his explanation remained a mystery and was readily dismissed by the English Psychologists of the seventeenth century. Unfortunately his philosophy did not survive the materialistic philosophy of the later times, and no further investigations were made regarding the valuable doctrines that he presented. His theory that individual is a part of the cosmos, accords with our own.

> "He [Spinoza] tried to merge his own desires with the universal order of things, to become an almost indistinguishable part of nature"[54].
>
> "The greatest good is the knowledge of the union which the mind has with the whole nature".

> Here was a clue to the understanding of deeper realms of Psychology, e.g. parapsychology, extra-sensory-perception and depth-psychology.

These sectors have been widely studied and analyzed by Indian thought which in the field of psychology and in others offers explainations which are even today undoubtedly considered on the cutting edge of science.

> Unfortunately the reactions against his philosophy by the Associationists[55], like Hobbes (1588-1679) and Locke (1632-1714), gave a set-back to his theories.

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[54] Ibid, p.187.

[55] Associationism is a psychologic and gnoseologic doctrine, according to which mental facts are associations between ideas, regulated by laws. Theorized by the British Empiricists of the 18th century, Associationism became the foundation for the gnoseologic and psychologic researches all over the Positivism in the 18th century.

> Locke (even though he was a Christian) dissociated mental behaviour from God, and asserted that "there is nothing in the mind except what was first in the senses".

According to Locke, ideas solely derive from experience and therefore originate not from spontaneous creation in the human intellect, but rather by its *passiveness* in the face of reality. This conditions intellect to be fully conditioned by the stimulation it receives through the senses.

> In his famous publication *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, he asserted that "there is nothing in the mind except what was first in the senses". Thus mind at birth is a clean sheet, a *tabula rasa*.

This statement does not agree with the classical Indian psychology. As we have already explained, classical Indian psychology is rooted in Vedic knowledge, where one of the fundamental postulates is the eternity of the soul, who accumulates experiences from one life to the next.

The *Shruti* and *Smriti* literatures teach that the *atman* is not born and does not die[56]. Birth simply corresponds to the moment when the spiritual, immortal and unchangeable living entity enters within a specific physical covering, while death is the time when it leaves it. Therefore birth and death do not affect in any way the continuity of existence and individual consciousness.

Vedic literature explains that the spiritual being transmigrates from one physical matrix (*yoni*) to another while riding the subtle body (*sukshma sarira*), constituted by *manas* (mind), *prana* (life airs) and *ahamkara* (sense of ego). Within the subtle body the individual retains, albeit at a subconscious level, the innumerable impressions accumulated during his samsaric development. At the time

[56] See *Bhagavadgita* II. 16-20.

of birth therefore, the mind is nothing like a *tabula rasa*, but is rather like a recorded tape, with innumerable engravings. Hindovedic psychology defines in this way the remote origin of otherwise inexplicable natural pre-dispositions, innate talents (for example Leonardo da Vinci, Mozart etc) or congenital psycho-pathologies.

> Locke proved that matter does not exist except as a form of mind. Here he approaches Vedantic monism [and the most recent scientific theories].

Regarding Vedantic monism (*Advaita-vedanta*), it negates the existence of matter, and compares the world to the magic of a wizard. On the other hand, the schools of the *Bhagavata* personalistic tradition define the world as real, although very different from what sense perceive. The definitions of transient and unsubstantial which are sometimes attributed to the objective world must therefore be referred to the changing and transient nature of matter.

> Berkeley (1685-1753) followed and went a step further that all matter is a mental condition. We perceive matter only through the mind.

Berkeley resolved the reality of material substances within perception (*Esse est percipi*). According to the Irish philosopher, natural objects do not have a real existence distinct from their perception by the intellect (in this he was brilliantly anticipating the most recent scientific conclusions). In fact, it is impossible to conceive a perceptible object as separate or distinct from the relative perception. The object and its perception are the same thing, and cannot be abstracted one from the other. Thus Berkeley actually stated that there is no bodily substance or matter, in the commonly intended sense - as immediate object of our knowledge. This object is just an idea, and the idea does not exist if it is not perceived. Therefore the only real substance is the spirit which perceives the ideas. Locke's empiricism is

therefore utilized by Berkeley to defend spiritual and religious values.

Both Locke and Berkeley were soon refuted by David Hume (1711-1776). He held that mind is simply an abstract name for the series of ideas. We perceive ideas concerning matter. Hume thus very strongly banished mind and soul from Psychology. He killed mind as Berkeley killed matter.

The reader can imagine the unfortunate plight of Western psychology at this juncture. Mere confusion prevailed. While Bishop George Berkeley denied the existence of the external world, David Hume in his famous *Treatise on Human Nature* questioned the existence of mind, soul and God.

Before Berkeley and Hume, Leibniz (1646-1716) had tried to harmonise mind and matter through his doctrines of *Psycho-physical Parallelism* and *Pre-established Harmony*. According to him body and mind worked together like two perfect clocks, keeping the same time without a common control.

According to this doctrine, soul and body follow each their own laws, but they have been created so perfectly that they function in complete harmony. While the body follows its mechanical laws, and the soul follows its internal spontaneity, the two are in a constant harmony, established by God at the time of creation.

But such an explanation did not satisfy the later thinkers.

3. Psychology in the 18th Century

The famous German Philosopher Emmanuel Kant (1724-1804) attempted to unify the ideas of Berkeley and Hume. He pleaded for the banishment of the mind or soul as an immediate object of study. Though this only avoided the problem and did not solve it, this, however,

> helped later the empirical study of mental processes and human actions rather than speculations about soul, regarding which only useless attempts have been made in the West. But when he explains his monistic idealism that space is subjective and an innate property of mind, he makes a positive contribution.

Kant elaborated a new theory of knowledge intended as a synthesis of *matter* and *form*. As *matter* of the knowledge, Kant intends the whole of the sense impressions, particular and changing, that come from experience (which he defines as empirical element, or *a posteriori*). As *form*, he defines the whole of those modalities used by the mind to perceive and think the reality (which he defines as rational element or *a priori*). Thus Kant is convinced that the psyche actively filtrates the empirical data through patterns of forms which are innate in the mind, and which are common to each thinking subject (transcendental). These *a priori* forms can be compared to hypotethically colored eyeglasses that influence our way of seeing reality. Among the *a priori* forms, Kant also lists space and time.

Vedic philosophy, too, explains that the mind, just like the physical body, is constituted by *prakriti* and therefore can function only within the space-time paradigm, and the way this is perceived is totally dependent upon the subject and his sensory and psychic structure.

Kant's theory of *a priori* forms implies the gnoseologic distinction between the *phenomenon* and the *object in itsef.* The phenomenon is reality when it appears to us through the *a priori* forms that are characteristic of our knowledge structure. As such, the phenomenon is not an illusory appearance, because it is a real object, although it is only real in relationship to the knowing subject. The object in itself, on the other hand, is the reality separated from the *a priori* forms, through which we know it. In Kant's view, knowledge is thus limited to the field of experience (*phenomenon*), while the *noumenon* cannot be known by man - therefore it is impossible to have a metaphysic

science. *Transcendence*, defined by Kant as "what is situated beyond space and time", is therefore out of the reach of the human mind.

Hindovedic philosophy agrees on this point, but in opposition to Kant's thought, also offers a positive alternative: an efficient method, successfully experimented in the course of millennia, to deconstruct psychic conditionings so that the mind can become a transparent instrument of perception that allows the reconnection and harmonization between the historical ego and the spiritual self, the original identity of the living being. At the apex of this self-realization process, the individual becomes able to contemplate reality directly through pure consciousness, extending his understanding of reality to the highest peaks of the Divine.

In this perspective, therefore, man can not only access the knowledge of sensitive reality, but the knowlegde of ultra-sensitive reality as well, which is no less real and concrete than the former - rather, it is the foundation and background of all that exists. This can happen only through inner enlightenment, mystical intuition, which allows us to access the vision of reality, without the mediation and distortion of the limited and illusory perceptions of senses and mind.

> In his *Critique of Pure Reason* Kant puts the right check on the so-called infallibility of reason. Even our sensations are innate and selective. Thus reasoning is an imperfect road to knowledge and truth. Perceptions remaining the same, our judgements can differ. That is the reason for individual differences in men.

The *Vaishnava Vedanta* philosophers also maintain that the functions of reasoning and logic, which they recognize as valuable and worthy of the highest development, are insufficient in themselves to access the deepest layers of reality, and the transcendent sphere of Spirit. This requires a journey of individuation of the self, that enables the individual to reclaim his own pure

consciousness, essential attribute of the spiritual being or *atman*.

> The limitations of Kant's contribution appeared evident when he declared measurement as necessary only for scince and not for psychology. In this way, he delayed the experimental aspect of psychology.
>
> Schopenhauer (1788-1860) made a stronger attack on materialism than Kant did. How can we explain mind as matter, when we knew matter only through mind? Hence he pleaded for his idealism "The World is my idea".

According to Schopenhauer, who further elaborates on Kant's concepts of phenomena and noumena, the sensory world is appearance, illusion, dream. The phenomenon described by Schopenhauer is a representation which exists only *within* the consciousness, while the noumenon is the reality hidden behind the deceptive veil of phenomenic appearance, and which must be discovered by the philosopher. Schopenhauer enthusiastically appreciated Vedic wisdom and, as he directly admits, he was greatly inspired by the study of the *Upanishads.* In fact, concepts similar to those expounded by him had already been well known for at least one thousand years, codified in the Indian thought system known as Shankara's *Advaita-vedanta*, which elaborated the concept of " *Maya*'s veil"[57].

> Schopenhauer discovered a power within -- Will -- that moulds every form, in plants, animals and men. But his extreme pessimism and his unduly exaggerated criticism against life, objects of pleasures, women, sex, beauty and arts leads dangerously to unbalanced views about human psychology.

[57] Echoing a famous passage of the ancient Vedic texts, Schopenhauer writes: "*Maya* is the deceptive veil that covers the eyes of the mortals, and shows them a world which cannot be defined as existing or not existing, because she resembles a dream, the sun's reflection on sand mistaken by the distant pilgrim for water; it also resembles the rope thrown on the ground, which he mistakes for a serpent." (*World as Will and Representation*, I, 3).

Schopenhauer identifies the deep essence of the self with the yearning, or “willingness to live” (*Wille zum leben*), or an overwhelming and irresistible impulse that pushes us into being and acting. Our body, according to Schopenhauer, is nothing but the *external* manifestation of our *internal* yearnings. This willingness to live, blind and irrational, pervades all beings, albeit in different forms and according to different levels of awareness - which range from organic matter where it appears unconsciously, to man where it becomes fully conscious.

In Schopenhauer's universe, God does non exist; there is no sensible horizon to explain life. The only Absolute is Will, a causeless instinct, that has the only purpose of self-preservation.

To state that the living entity is the manifestation of an infinite Will amounts to saying, according to Schopenhauer, that life is essentially suffering. In facts, willing means desiring, and desiring means finding oneself in a state of tension for the lack of something we do not have, and we would like to have. Desire is therefore synonym with emptyness, absence, pain. The pleasure (which is physical) and the joy (which is psychic) are nothing but the temporary cessation of pain, as Schopenhauer explains in the following passage:

“Each will comes forth from the need, that is lacking, that is suffering. This is ended by fulfillment, but for each fulfilled desire we still have at least ten which remain unfulfilled. Besides, yearning lasts in time, needs are endless; while fulfillment is short and scarcely measured - indeed, final satisfaction itself is only apparent: the fulfilled desire immediately generates a new desire. That one was an acknowledged mistake, this one is a still unknown mistake. No object of will, once attained, can give lasting satisfaction […] it only resembles the alms which, thrown to the beggar, prolongs his life today so that tomorrow his suffering can continue.” (*The World as Will and Representation*, I, 38).

Vedic tradition also establishes the equation *embodied life = suffering*. However, we must clarify that in this contest, embodied life represents a condition of existence

which is *innatural* and *pathologic.* In its originary dimension existence is characterized by eternal and unlimited bliss (*ananda*).

Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy thus finds only a partial and limited confirmation in Vedic thought. Analogies appear especially where Schopenhauer describes the characteristics of the conditioned beings, victims of selfish desires and lust (*kama*), a concept which we could apply to the blind and unrestrainable Will of Schopenhauer; in facts *kama* can never be fully satisfied, and therefore it just anticipates suffering.

In oppostion to Schopenhauer, however, ancient Indian sages explain that happiness and complete fulfillment do exist, but in order to attain them, the living being must again become aware of his deep identity, and search for happiness, not in the ephemeral world of sensory appearances, but in the real world of Spirit.

> In his later years, being influenced by the profound philosophy of *Upanishads,* Schopenhauer tried to reconcile his pessimism and frustration with *vairagya* (emotional detachment) of *Vedanta*, and proclaimed *nirvana* as the ultimate wisdom, but he missed many essential features of Indian philosophy. Indian philosophy bears a well-marked contrast to the pessimism of Schopenhauer.
>
> Schopenhauer discussed threefold divisions of mental processes, viz. intellect, feeling and will. William Hamilton (1788-1856) went a step further in discovering six separate faculties and thus founded the *faculty psychology*. But Herbart[58] (1776-1841) disproved the faculty theory by explaining all mental processes through apperception and interaction.

4. Psychology in the 19th Century

[58] German philosopher and pedagogist, he conceived philosophy as elaboration of concepts supplied by experience.

Nineteenth Century saw the foundations of the experimental psychology[59], a landmark in the history of Western psychology. The earlier thinkers only paved way for a detailed study of sense perception and nervous system. The concerns of psychology became more that of anatomists than that of armchair philosophers.

Johannes Miller conducted experiments on sensory-motory action.

Weber's law (1795-1878) on sensations was a new discovery in the field of perception.

Weber, professor of anatomy and physiology, was the first to introduce manipulation and experimental control in purely psychological phenomena, and to give them a precise quantitative definition.

For example, Weber elaborated the concept of “minimal perceptible differences”, which was the formulation of the first really quantitative law of pyschology. He determined the minimal difference that can be perceived between two weights in relationship to the different sensory modalities (touch perception, muscle perception, visual perception) and he deducted that for the minimal perceptible differences there is a constant fraction for each of the senses. This demonstrated experimentally that there is no direct reciprocal correspondence between the physical stimulation and its perception.

In this connection Fechner[60] (1801-1887) was the first to give psychology a definite experimental foundation. His psycho-physical methods revealed new facts about perception.

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[59] Experimental psychology is a laboratory science specifically dealing with the problems connected to perception, learning, thinking, by utilizing control and measurement instruments.

[60] German psychologist, philosopher and physicist; together with W. Wundt, he founded Experimental Psychology. The psycho-physical law that was named after him states that the intensity of a perception is proportional to the logaritm of the intensity of stimulation.

Detailed experiments were made by Wilhelm Wundt[61] (1832-1920) in his experimental laboratory (the first of its kind in Europe). Since then the experimental studies in Europe and America about perception and learning have met remarkable success.

Another shift effected was from physiological study to biological study. Thus Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), in his *Principles of Biology* defined life as “the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations.” He saw before him a magnificent drama of the cycle of evolution taking place. Side by side with the evolution of life he saw the evolution of mind taking place, and this he explained in his two volumes on *The Principles of Psychology*. His “evolution of mind” bears resemblance with our *Samkhya* theory of evolution. But his ideas were circumscribed by Lamarck's theory[62] (1744-1829) of transmissibility of acquired characteristics.

According to Lamarck, the evolution of the living beings is a process caused by the adaptation of the individuals to the environment, and is based on the hereditary transmission of those traits which are favorable to adaptation.

[61] German psyhiologist and psychologist; he created a method to measure quantitatively the psychic variables. He is considered the founder of Experimental Psychology.

[62] French naturalist, whose activities as a botanicist and zoologist constituted in the West the beginning of systematic studies on evolution. His theory is based on two postulates or laws: The Law of Use and Disuse, and the The Law of Transmissibility of Acquired Characteristics. With the first law, Lamarck theorized than any part of the body, if used frequently enough would develop and increase in size; conversely, the bodily parts which were not used would become weaker, atrophised, or would even disappear. With the second postulate, Lamarck maintained that any animal can transmit to its offspring the acquired characteristics, or the characteristics strengthened by usage and those weakened by lack of usage. According to Lamarck, therefore, the new species would evolve over many generations through the acquisition of new characteristics and the loss of old ones. While the first postulate of the French biologist has been demonstrated as valid, the second has been disproved as non verifiable.
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> Spencer traced the present mental mechanism of human beings to the nerves - processes evolved mechanically not only from the primitive life but also remotely from primeval nebula. Nevertheless, he is not able to explain the origin of mind and consciousness.

Spencer identified evolution as the fundamental law explaining all phenomena (natural, psychic, social) and defined it as the passage from homogeneous to heterogeneous, from indefinite to definite. This concept is found, albeit with clearly different values, in the philosophy of the *Upanishads*, which describes creation as the act of *the One who wanted to become many* (see *Chandogya Upanishad* VI.2).

The *Samkhya* system as well describes the origin and the development of the sensitive universe and the universal psychic structure as the passage from a primordial state of balance and non-differentiation to a state of heterogeneity. According to the *Samkhya* the evolution of phenomena is made possible by the interaction of Spirit with non-manifested material Nature (*avyakta*), which causes the activation of the three dormant, and then structuring, energies of Nature, initiating its movement. These forces are the *gunas*: *tamas*, *rajas* and *sattva*. The influence of Spirit affects the state of balance which is characteristic of the primordial non-manifested Nature and, as a result, the *gunas* start to effect their metamorphic activity which is the principle of creation and the origin of the manifold.

> To Spencer, mind is subjective accompaniment of nerve processes. But wherefrom this subjective accompaniment? Had he been an Indian, believing in the existence of *atman* that illuminates the body and mind, the problem was solved. But here he falters, and the problem lay as it was.

In this regard, we may note that Yoga literature defines the mind as an instrument that can be utilized by the *atman.* The psyche in itself, just like any other instrument,

has no independent conscious life; it works like a crystal in that it reflects the objects which come in front of it, and it functions consciously only because the spiritual being reflects his awareness into it. The energies of the psyche are actually the energies of the *gunas*, energies that the *atman* can and should manage with the intent of becoming free from the shackles of conditionings. Through the mind, the *atman* perceives the phenomenic world, but the subject of perception is the *atman* himself, and not the mind. Following the Vedic concept, we could compare the mind to the container and the *atman* to the contents.

For Western psychology, which is alien to this perspective, the origin of the mind and its energies still remains unknown.

> Biological studies bore one fruit. A study of hereditary characteristics, influence of environment, instincts and emotions were made more deeply. The studies were based both on the theory of Lamarck and of Darwin (1809-1882). Darwin's theory of evolution, *Descent of Man* and *The Survival of the Fittest*, gave some clue to tracing the mental capacities of man from more rudimentary proto-types of animals.

Darwin's evolutionism theory fundamentally implied the possibility of a basic continuity of characteristics beween the mind of animals and the mind of man. The demonstration of such animal-man continuity (still unverified) was largely based on anatomical findings, but it suggested the existence of a similar continuity in the area of behavioral development and mental processes. Based on these considerations, many scientists started to study the functions of the mind in animals, introducing a new kind of research in the psychological laboratory: ethology.

With Darwin, Western psychology started to take more and more interest in the problems of the adaptation of the body to one's environment, and as a result, the minute and detailed analysis of the elements constituting the consciousness became less and less important.

Francis Galton (1822-1911), Darwin's cousin, studied the genius, the various human traits and the primary abilities[63]. He paved the way for Spearman, Thorndike[64] and Thurnstone for analysing the structure of human abilities.

The twentieth century saw the development of the measurement side of abilities and personal traits at the hands of Cattell[65], Binet[66], Simon, Terman[67], Merril, Weschler, Alexander, Murray, Morgan[68] and many others.

A historian will discover clearly Western psychology oscillating and changing hands from materialists to naturalists, from naturalists to idealists and back, again from idealists to materialists. The real sense of this unstability is the absence of certain fundamental principles governing life and the Universe, explored long ago in India by the seers of the *Upanishads*, out of which only some glimpses were caught here and there by the European master-minds.

Rationalism and materialism prevailed in the last century in Europe. But soon there was a revolt against it. Bergson (1859-1941) declared consciousness

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63 Many are the fields of research inaugurated by Galton and explored by the subsequent generations of psychologists: adaptation, the problem of the relationship between hereditariety and environment, compared anthropology, the study of childhood psychology, the use of the questionary (*mental tests*), statistical techniques, the complex issue of individual differences.

64 Thorndike (1874-1949), one of Cattel's students, elaborated an extremely systematic version of the psychology of stimulation-response, translated in purely associationistic terms. He created a type of experimental associationism he called "connectionism", which in many essential points differentiated itself from the tradition of orthodox associationism: instead of speaknig of associations and connections between ideas, Thorndike spoke about connections between situations and the responses of the subject.

65 A psychologist from the United States (1860-1944). Cattell decisively contributed to the direction of American psychology, in the time of its most intense development, towards the study of the mental processes inspired by extremely practical considerations and based on the systematic use of tests (*mental tests*).

66 French psychologist (1857-1911) who, together with Simon, invented in 1905 the first test to measure the development of intelligence (Binet-Simon scale). Together with Galton and Cattel, he gave a strong impetus to the field of psycological tests.

67 One of the most important American researchers on mental tests and techniques for measuring individual differences.

68 Morgan (1852-1936), belonging to the Behavioralism school (see the chapter *Contemporary Schools of Psychology*), he was one of the first scientists to study animal psychology.

as distinct from the organism which it animates[69]. In his clear distinction between consciousness and the nervous system, he gives rational proof for it, and that supports our Indian doctrine.

"The lower we go in animal series, the more nervous centers are simplified and separate from one another, and at last they disappear altogether, merged in the genera mass of an organism with hardly any differentiation. If, then, at the top of scale of living beings, consciousness is attached to very complicated nervous centers, must we not suppose that it accompanies the nervous system down in its whole descent, and that when at last the nerve stuff is merged in the yet undifferentiated living matter, consciousness is still there, diffused, confused, but not reduced to nothing?"[70].

Bergson believed in evolution but he gave a more comprehensive view by declaring that "there is something more in evolution than a helpless mechanism of material parts. Life is more than its machinery; it is power that can grow, that can restore itself, that can mould to its own will some measure of environing circumstance"[71].

The philosophical tradition of *Vaishnava Vedanta* explains in details the distinction between consciousness and matter, describing the relationship between them, and how consciousness can modify matter: thought organizes and structurates matter by creating objects and forms that respond to specific mental patterns. Even the body and the sense structure of each living entity are simply the product of his level of consciousnes: it is mentality that creates

69 Bergson, *Mind-Energy*, p.11.
70 Ibid.
71 Will Durant, *Story of Philosophy*.

physical organs. Most recent science has come, or is coming, in different ways to the same conclusions[72].

> Bergson was the first evolutionist to discover a vital urge -- Elan Vital -- the source of all the evolutionary process and the basis of creation, activity and struggle.
>
> The impulse and desire acting as an active force in evolution, explained by Bergson, may be compared to *kama* of the *Upanishadic* seers.

In fact, also in Vedic culture desire (*kama*) has a determinant role in establishing the future life conditions of the individual. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* states:

"Verily, it is said that man is made of desire, but according to the desire is the will, according to the will is the action, according to the action is the consequent result" (IV, 4, 5).

The *Chandogya Upanishad* confirms with the following statement:

"And the man, according to the will power that he possesses in this world, he so becomes after death. We have to be careful about what we want" (III, 14,1).

> Greater still against the materialistic mechanism was the criticism and attack by Bergson's contemporary Professor James Ward (1848-1925) of Cambridge University. In his *Principles of Psychology*, first published in 1919, he refuted the Associationists and Behaviourists and all others who did not include a definite "mind". Like the Indian seers, he caught the glimpse of the "ego" (*aham*) , which gave unity to all the mental behaviour.
>
> Experience of each moment may be trivial. But whence the continuance of experience? It is the Ego that brings this continuance and dominates all the changes in the consciousness.

[72] See Michael Talbot, *Tutto è uno*, Urra, 1997.

His contemporary American philosopher William James[73] (1842-1910), expressed a similar idea regarding the continuance of experience by using a metaphor called "Stream of Consciousness." He too declared that all the mental processes are but "phases of unitary continuous whole of the experience that runs without sharp break from birth to death"[74]. But believing in pluralistic theism, a number of Gods rather than one, a multiverse rather than a universe, and a number of diverse cross-currents rather than a harmonious system of cosmos, he missed the fundamental unity of Reality.

Psychology in the 19th century was thus studied from different angles. It was influenced by new discoveries in Physics. Further achievements in Chemistry led to the idea of a "mental chemistry", whence sprang up Associationism. Biology influenced it, and a number of psychological doctrines were based on the theory of evolution as presented by Lamarck, Darwin, Galton e Spencer. In the field of methods, the method of introspection gave way to the method of experimentation.

5. Contemporary Schools of Psychology

The 20th century saw the development of definite diverse systems of psychology, in some cases contradicting each other and in certain areas supplementing each other. The Behaviourism of Watson (1878-1958) tries to explain each and every mental phenomena through stimulus and response. According to this school, man is practically a machine, all the mental activities are performed mechanically, and there is nothing like consciousness.

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[73] Harbinger of functional psychology, a school that became prominent in the United States during the second half of the 18th century and defines the mental function as the operation necessary to mediate between the environment and the needs of the body, acting on physical reality or ideas. Among the other exponents of functionalism we may mention Darwin, Galton e Spencer.
[74] W.B.Philsbury, *History of Psychology*, p.240.

They study human behaviour because man's mental activity is known to us by his behaviour alone.

Behaviourism cannot explain the diversity of behaviour of individuals in a common situation. Nor can it go deep into the inner working of the mind. It has at the most covered the field of sense perception. The higher faculties of mind like will, imagination, reasoning, judgement and the like are beyond the purview of Behaviourism.

The very fundamental principle of Behaviourism was questioned by McDougall[75], the propounder of *Purposive Psychology* or *Hormic Psychology*. He distinguishes a human activity (or even an activity of an animal) from a mechanical activity, as the former is characterised most pronouncedly by "free will". Life of every living being has a purpose behind it; it is *teleological*. A machinery does not conserve the experience-engrams, while an animal does.

Modern robotics have excluded this assumption. The difference is based more on the freedom of choice, even in front of equal memories: the robotic choice is pre-determined, while the human choice, although conditioned by the three *gunas*, is potentially free because it is supported by consciousness.

Whence this conservation of experience, and whence the horme -- the life urge, the will to live? Materialistic mechanism thus stands clearly refuted at the hands of McDougall. The analytical type of psychology which empahises the analysis of each type of mental activity has been corrected by the *Gestalt*[76]

[75] The British psychologist McDougall (1871-1938) was one of the main opponents of Watson. Probably the greatest contribution offered by McDougall is his instinctual theory of behavior, stating that all human actions result from spontaneous tendencies to thought and action.

[76] In German language, *Gestalt* means 'form'. According to this school the total form, and not the single element, is the fundamental fact of consciousness, because such form can never be reduced to a sum or combination of elements. *Gestalt*

Psycology which levied emphasis on the synthetic whole, as opposed to the parts. It is the total personality that thinks, feels and acts. Thus the conscious self is a unity, and not sum-total or aggregate of diverse instincts, emotions, habits and tendencies. But further explanation of the totality of the mind, and the various states like conscious and unconscious, are wanting in this school of thought also.

All the three schools [Behavioralism, Ormic Psychology and *Gestalt* Psychology] have been concerned with the conscious mind only. But what about the wealth of mental behaviour stored in the unconscious? We owe a lot to Sigmund Freud (1856-1940) for his discovery of the unconscious[77], and later to Alfred Adler[78] (1870-1937) and Carl Gustav Jung[79] (1875-1961) for further exploration in this direction and for enlivening and enriching the school of Psycho-analysis.

Freud's discoveries constitute a landmark in the history of Western psychology. Basing his conclusions on abnormal neurotics, and combining experimentation and observation with introspection, he explored new

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psychology, therefore, does not consider the single phenomena of consciousness, but rather *forms* or *configurations* or *fields*, taken in their complete structure.

[77] We must, however, clarify that actually Freud was not the first Western researcher to discover, or even discuss in rigorous terms, the phenomenon of subconscious. The history of theories on subconscious in the West can actually be traced back to Plato with his doctrine of reminiscence (“to know is to remember” since ideas, albeit vague, are carried within ourselves). Among less ancient examples we may mention Leibnitz (1646-1716), Herbart (1776-1841) and Fechner. Fechner, who had a remarkable influence on Freud, compared the mind to an *iceberg*, in the sense that a considerable part of the mind remain hidden below the surface, where it is affected by invisible forces. Freud's merit, compared to his Western predecessors, was to deeply investigate the meaning of subconscious motivations, finding the way to study them.

[78] Austrian psycho-analyst; he was one of Freud's students but he took his distance in 1911 to establish the preminence of social and relational factors in psychic conflicts: according to Adler human behavior is not determined by the biological forces of instinct, but rather by social forces. His theory of *individual psychology* puts at the center of the development of the personality the inferiority feeling created in the child by his dependency from adults: this conditions the life style in the individual both in a positive sense as a stimulation to improve oneself, and in a negative sense as a cause of neurosis.

[79] Founder of analytical psychology; the most famous among Freud's students, and also the most distant. Among his main works we may mention *Transformations and Symbols of Libido* (1912), *Psychological Types* (1921), *The ego and the unconscious* (1928), *Psychology of the unconscious* (1943).

> fields in the realm of unconscious (so far unknown to the Western thinkers, but already explained in India in thread-bare outline). But both Freud and Adler miss the fundamental source of unconscious behaviour, while they exaggerate the instincts of sex and self-assertion respectively.

According to Freud, the unconscious psychic processes are dominated by tendencies that can be defined as
"sexual", both in the strict and the wider sense of the word. Freud explains the entire life of man, and not only the private or individual life, but the public or social life as well, by resorting to one force only: sexual instinct or *libido*.

Alternatively, according to Hindovedic psychology, the libido only represents *one* of the components of psychic energy, determining the unconscious impulses of the individual. The Vedic concept of *kama* (impulse, desire) is in fact not restricted to the simple notion of "sexual instinct" but indicates more generally the tendency to one's own self-affirmation, which can assume different aspects and be expressed in different contexts.

Traditional Indian psychology differs again from Freud's concepts of the experiences of early childhood as a decisive influence on the shaping of character. Freud says that by searching the childhood one can find the origin of most nervous diseases, especially created by the irresolved conflict between instincts and moral principles.

On the other hand, according to the Hindovedic perspective, which considers the immortality of the being and the transmigration of the soul, the pathogenesis must be searched not simply in childhood, but in the previous lifetimes as well.

Furthermore, it is important to note that Freudian-style researches only considers clinical cases of pathologic conditions connected to the areas of subconscious. On the other hand, the science of psychology that we find in the works on *Ayurveda* or *Yoga* identify, besides the deviated and dark territory of the subconscious, the radiant

dimension of the super-conscious - that transcendent realm beyond empirical reality, where the individual mind contacts the universal Mind, and the individual consciousness touches the cosmic Consciousness and the Divine.

The *Vaishnava Vedanta* school does not necessarily interpret every deviation from the ordinary psychological norm as a pathological manifestation. It demonstrates that there is an endless range of feelings, emotions and states of consciousness that are beyond the reach of all those experienced on the phenomenic level by the conditioned consciousness[80].

The mystical ecstasies of saints, for example, can be externally assimilated in their symptoms to psycho-pathologic phenomena, but they certainly do not constitute a loss of awareness. Rather, by the extraordinary development of the higher qualities of the mind, they ascend to an elevated level of consciousness, where they leave sensory reality to access the ultra-sensory reality.

Both in the case of psycho-pathology and in the case of mystical ecstasy, the individual experiences a state of "ab-normal" consciousness, if "normal" indicates the ordinary state of wakefulness and identification with wordly phenomenon. Between the two subjects, however, there is a huge difference: in the psycopath the loss of contact with the sensory reality coincides with the perception of illusory forms or hallucinations, while in the mystic the loss of contact with wordly phenomena is a transcendental process ascending to a more elevated dimension of consciousness and existence: that dimension described in the *Shastra* as spiritual reality.

In the first case, the subject slides into a sub-reality ruled by confusion and suffering, while in the second case it is the ascent to a higher reality, where everything integrates in harmony, creating a state of bliss. Both individuals, the psychopath and the mystic, are alienated from the

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[80] See the doctrine of *rasas* or spiritual sentiments.

phenomenal world, but the former finds degradation in his alienation, while the latter finds growth and elevation.

The psychopath's return to “ordinary” consciousness is marked by dismay, frustration and confusion, while the mystic returns enriched, full of joy, vision, serenity and safety, not only for the individual himself, but also for all those who come in touch with him. Sometimes he never comes back to “ordinary” consciousness, but while the psychopath finds his condition implying a life of miseries and constant suffering, the mystic finds the attainment of the most elevated state of awareness, characterized by a general state of internal well being, sometimes with mystical ecstasy.

> Jung traces the behaviour to the racial past and opens fresh vistas for racial psychology.
>
> He makes an approach nearer to Indian psychology, but misses the central focus, while he has a 20th century German flouts at the Eastern idea of "Soul" animating human behaviour. In his *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, he distinguishes between the Traditional "Soul" and the "Psyche", the conscious principal governing mental activities. He accepts intuition, but a little more intuition could have brought him close to the comprehensive Indian view.

Jung's concept of psychology is in some ways similar to Vedic knowledge, which he explicitly quotes, where it defines the transcendent dimension of the self in respect to the limited and narrow dimension of the ego.

However, it is important to remark that Jung's concept of *animus/soul* is quite different from the definition of *atman*. For Jung, the self is a psychic entity, while for Vedic literature the self or *atman* is a purely spiritual entity, with inalienable characteristics of eternity, awareness and bliss.

Furthermore, we should remember that Jung's concept is fundamentally different from Freud's, who absolutely negated the transcendent dimension of the self.

Jung states that complete healing is never possible without developing a religious attitude, while Freud states exactly the opposite: complete healing is never possible without arriving, at the end of a process of rational reclaiming of one's self, to get rid of a religious attitude.

Just like Western psychology, the *Vaishnava Vedanta* remarks that the human being is endowed with a personality capable to create a relationship between his own individual consciousness and a territory of being that is perceived by the subject himself as transcending the limits of such consciousness, and situated beyond his own identity. Many fields of existence can facilitate this relationship of interaction, dialogue or osmosis between the contents of the individual consciousness and the contents of what is perceived as other than self. This dialogue, this widening of subjective limitations, this meeting with the other, when experienced on the mundane platform, do not allow the relationship with a transcendence where we can trace back both the concerned individualities.

The *Vaishnava Vedanta* explains that the experience of love and devotion for God is the only experience that allows one to raise their vision beyond the mundane and to discover a higher horizon uniting the self and the other, because it manifests a dimension of being that includes and transcends both - a primordial "place of belonging" that enables us to overcome the limitations of our personal representation, and find our own context and purpose of life in relationship to ourselves, to the creatures, to the creation, and to the Creator.

> This is the story of Wester psychology[81], an interesting story of human struggle for the achievement and discovery of knowledge of the very instrument of knowledge - mind. A vast body of literature has been produced through the untiring efforts of Western scholars during the last two millenniums and a half. But if we compare what has been achieved, with what

[81] Recently cybernetics has taken a certain type of psychology to make gigantic steps: see *Cybernetic Psychology* by Maxwell Maltz.

remains unexplored, the achievement is very humble. Even the most fundamental problems of psychology remain unsolved. Groping in the dark, Western psychologists have faltered at every step, making a little headway through the feeble light of a ray of reality perceived here and there, but stoppnig again and fumbling off and on. That is the reason for the instability of psychological doctrines, and oscillation from the extreme nodes of theism to atheism, materialism to idealism, monism to pluralism, intuitionism to objectivism, and so on. No wonder, if in a state of indefiniteness, even the most fundamental problems given below remain unsolved. Some of the problems are:

1. The problem of continuity of experience;
2. The problem of the nature and origin of mind;
3. The problem of of physiological basis of mind;
4. The problem of body-mind relationship;
5. The problem of survival and immortality of mind;
6. The problem of extra-sensory perception;
7. The problem of dream-phenomena;
8. The problem of heredity versus environment;
9. The problems concerning mental hygiene and abnormal psychology;
10. The problem of positive status versus normative status of psychology; and
11. The problem of method of studying psychology.

VIII. The Western Approach to Psychology

The foregoing discussion about the historical development of Western psychology, and the puzzling problems that remain still unsolved, will unable us to generalise briefly the most prominent lacunas and limitations of Western psychology.

1. Methods of Research

Western psychology has unfortunately abandoned the Introspection method. Introspection

needs to be developed more deeply and applied more extensively.

2. Field of Research

Western psychology studies some aspects of the wakeful state or conscious level of mind. It makes just an attempt into the Unconscious. The Superconscious is as yet outside its purview. It does not accept the doctrine of past births of individuals, the past *samskaras* or engrams accumulated into the mind-stuff, the reality of the dreams and the reality of extrasensory perceptions. It does not take into account the pre-natal past of individual and the survival and immortality of the psyche.

3. The Vision of Life

Western psychology does not study man as a whole. It views human mental activity detached from his total life. It studies mind as a single separate phenomenon, while as mind has no independent existence apart from the Self. It is therefore, that Western psychology, disregarding the Self, the Spirit, the *atman,* and studying mental behaviour in a detached way, is not able to discover the true relationship between mind and body, mind and nervous mechanism, and cannot arrive at definite conclusions rearding the origin and nature of mind. In fact, Western psychologists study a subject whole bonafides are unknown to them. The body-mind problem can never be solved except in relation with the experiencing self, illuminating both. In words of Dr G. Ryle[82]:

"The trouble generally with Western thinkers is that not only do they view mind and matter as disfunctly capable of mutual exclusion, but they imagine that these alternations alone exhaust the field.

[82] Born in 1900, Ryle is professor at Oxford and director of *Mind*.

Until this attitude is modified and the recognition of Self over and above mind and matter is made, there can be no satisfactory solution for body-mind problems".

Western psychologists assume mind as an independent entity the subject of all mental actions and all the experiences *whileas* mind is no more than an instrument of action (as the body is) in the hands of the self. It is therefore called *antah-karana*, the inner instrument of action.

Western psychologists likewise, do not discover the source of continuity of all experience. Here also Self is unavoidable. Of course a discussion on the nature of the Self leads us to metaphysics which is beyond the frontiers of psychology. But true psychology cannot be studied without postulating the necessary fundamental metaphysical doctrines governing life and universe as a whole. If we miss the Self, we miss the focal point and the nucleons of all psychology.

Western psychology studies the mental functioning of men as individuals, as if there is no meeting plane of the individual minds.

It cannot conceive any universal or cosmic mind to which all the individual minds are related. It is therefore that it cannot account for the higher powers of mind or the ESP, like telephathy and clairvoyance.

Without any spiritual foundation, Western psychology cannot direct us to the highest fulfilment, unfolding and development of human personality. It can reveal neither the source nor the goal of human personality. In words of Sri Radhakrishnan:

"Unless human being is able to abstract from the world and get the divine presence, you cannot be said to reach at truth. It is therefore essential that if you are to develop any kind of spiritual values, you must subject yourself to considerable *Self-scrutiny*. That is

the meaning of meditation. Mere intellectual learning or mere pedantry does not take you to God.”

Psychology must help us in self-scrutiny and lead us to the path of spiritual bliss. Western psychology fails here.

IX. Unresolved Problems of Western Psychology

1. Continuity of Experience

A reference was made above regarding the bundle concept of David Hume and stream-concept of James. A question can be asked, what causes the continuity of experience? How do I know that the experiences of today and yesterday belong to the same person? A pure stream, or a mere bundle of experience cannot explain the phenomena. A continuous learning and memory must pre-suppose a learner or subject of memory. Memory vests in whom? Experience is accumulated in whom? Continuity of experience is brought by whom? These may be complex riddles in Western psychology, but have been explained long ago in India by the seers of the *Upanishads*.

In this connection James Ward had rightly pointed out the ridiculously unconvincing explanation given by Western psychologists regarding the continuity of experience. He comes very near our Indian point of view, when he discusses his theory of *continuum*. Upanishadic seers declared three thousand years ago that Seld is the substratum of all experience. “Know thy Self”.

Taittiriya Upanishad distinguishes between body, mind and Self. Self is beyond body and mind. All the Indian philosophies give detailed account of Self as the seer, knower and the doer and experiencer.

In this regard, we mention the following statement from the *Upanishads*:

“When the eye is fixed in the space, [the action is performed by] the person who resides in the eye; the eye is [just the material organ] used for seeing. The one who decides to smell is the *atman*; the nose is [just the material organ] used for smelling. The one who decides to speak is the *atman*; the word is [just the means] used for speaking.

The one who decides to hear is the *atman*; the ear is [just the material organ] used for hearing. And the one who decides to think is the *atman*; the mind is his divine eye.

[…] The gods venerate this *atman*: therefore they have power over all the world and all the desires. He who finds and recognizes this *atman* obtains all the worlds and [fulfills] all desires."[83]

> The Self is the bed of what William James calls "stream of consciousness". The Self is the permanent reality behind all the experiences, a background of all the states of consciousness *viz.* wakeful, dream, sleep, etc.
>
> He is the *subject*, as described by James Ward. The simplest argument regarding the existence of the Self as the substratum of experience is given in *Upanishads* and *Vedanta*. In the wakeful state I am aware of myself. In the dream I experience something and on waking I am aware that it was I who met the dream, for I remember all that. But when I am in deep-sleep state, I do not experience anything. But when I wake up, I do state, "I slept well". Was there any break in the experience? If we admit that, then the person before sleep must be different from the person after sleep. Hence there is a continuity of experience even during the sleep state. Naturally, even though the body and the mind are not working in that state,[84] a permanent "subject", besides mind, is there to vouchsafe the continuity of experience. This permanent subject is the Self. *Shankara* explains this point in detail.

In the Hindovedic perspective, not even death can compromise the continuity of experience and individual consciousness:

"For the soul, there is neither birth nor death. It exists and never ceases to exist. It is never born and never dies, it

[83] See *Chandogya Upanishad* VIII. 12. 4-6. Della Casa, C. *Upanishad vediche*, Milano, TEA, 1988. P. 221-2.

[84] Or better, they *seem* not to act. The "unconscious or analogical" mind, in facts, always keep working, not only in the stages of *rem* or deep sleep, but also in states of unconsciousness or anesthesia.

is eternal, original; it never had a beginning and it will never have end. It does not die when the body dies"; (*Bhagavadgita* II.20).

The philosophy of the *Upanishads* and that of *Samkhya* distinguish two different categories of energies which, although coming from the same divine source, are ontologically distinct: the spiritual energy, immortal and conscious, that constitutes the self or *atman*, and the material energy, eternal but continuously transforming, non sentient and subject to the conditioning and inevitable forces of time and space.

Being constituted of pure spiritual energy, the *atman* is in fact never touched by those natural phenomena of disgregation and destruction that control all the aggregates of matter.

In this context death loses most of its dramatic power because it becomes not a "point of no return" but rather one of the innumerable stages in the endless flow of life. Death is the moment when the living being leaves the physical body, which at that time is too worn out, and not suitable to contain life any more. In itself, death has no negative meaning. In fact, when it is lived with knowledge and awareness, it can represent a veritable turning point, a door opening towards a progressive evolution and reclaimed bliss.

2. Nature and Origin of the Mind

> Down from Plato up to the present day, various explanations have been given about the nature and origin of the mind. The Greek Idealists or Spiritualists explained in terms of a S*pirit*, but the very essence of the spirit was unknown and the idea vanished because of the vagueness. Even Persino Kant, Schopenhauer and Bergson became unnitelligible for the imperfect idealistic doctrines that they presented.

Behaviourists Watson, Bechterev[85], Pavlov[86], Max Meyer[87], Franz[88], Lashley[89] and others got rid of mind altogether. They talked of behaviour only. But it is not a fact that we ourselves experience our mind perceiving, thinking, feeling, willing, imagining, reasoning, discriminating and remembering? Our higher faculties of mind work at a deeper lvel than the perceptual level of stimulus and response.

Whence the memory? Watson calls it "old habitual path". Is it not an oversimplification? From this point of view Watson's book *Behaviourism* is just a bundle of responses corresponding to some stimuli. even that stimuli is undefined. In that case, W.Köhler's[90] *Gestalt Psychology* is a real bundle of responses as that of *Behaviourism*. Both are real and true, but reasoning fails here, as both are antagonistic.

Psychoanalysts like Freud, Adler and Jung do not possess any unanimity among themselves as regards the source of human mental behaviour. Therefore something is wrong with all of them.

Materialist Biologists assert that at various stages of material complexity, new properties emerge,

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[85] Russian physiologist; in 1907 he published *Objective Psychology*, stating the central theory of Behaviorism: psychology does not study the facts of consciousness or internal phenomena, but rather the reactions of the organism to stimulation, where reactions are the movements or objectively verifiable phenomena which are produced in relationship with the events of the environment, that act as stimulation.

[86] I.P.Pavlov, *Conditioned Reflexes*. Pavlov (1849-1936) was a Sovietic physiologist and physician. He taught physiology at the University of Petroburg and directed the Institute of Experimental Medicine from 1891 to 1936. He conducted important studies on conditioned reflexes, automatic reactions acquired by the organism after the repeated association between a stimulation and a particular event. Conditioned reflexes were discovered by Pavlov while studying dogs: by associating the sound of a bell with the distribution of food, for example, after a number of repeated actions he saw that the sound of the bell created an increase in salivary and gastric secretion in the animals even without giving them food. After Pavlov's discovery, in URSS there was a development of the psychological orientation of reflexology, which studied the modification of behavior on the basis of environment circumstances.

[87] M.Meyer, *The Fundamental Laws of Human Behaviour*.

[88] Teacher of Lashley and student of Cattel.

[89] Lashley (1890-1958) was an eminent physiological psychologist from America. Passionate supporter of Behavioralism, he strongly affirmed the need to increase objectivity in psychology negating the validity of the study of consciousness through introspection.

[90] German psychologist (1887-1967); together with M. Wertheimer and K. Koffka he founded the *Gestalt* psychology.

> and consciousness may be one of these. Following the laws of Physics, we can understand tha hydrogen and oxygen when put up together produce water which bears entirely new properties. But life and consciousness are not a property of matter. How do material aggregates produce distinct entity like life bearing quite strange properties like assimilation, growth, respiration, reproduction etc.? Again, at what stage of the evolution of matter, should we postulate the emergence of consciousness?
>
> Once we postulate a definite stage, the very premises fall, as it is against the very theory of evolution to postulate a line of demarcaton before which there was no life and after which life suddenly appeared. The sudden appearance of life will remain a mystery unaccountable for. The emergence theory that life emerges out of matter at a particular stage can safely be discarded. The same thing is true about the Dialectic Materialistic Theory of Karl Marx (1818-1883), that mind is nothing but a higher form of organic behaviour.

Every organism, from the simplest to the most complex, originates from microscopic chemical compounds, the DNA molecules, which are the essential constituents of each living cell. Contrarily to the positivistic thought, the *Vaishnava Vedanta* does not reduce the extraordinary biological processes to the result of mechanical forces, but rather it compares them to the construction of a building, planned in every detail by an intelligent architect. Beyond metaphores, this architect is the universal Consciousness, the *Brahman* or primeval life energy, the divine cosmic intelligence, the ordaining force that pervades all the elements of the universe and that, after generating the construction materials of the sensory world - the atoms - aggregates and arranges them to create the gigantic, multiform and complex structure of the phenomenal, and with it all the many living species.

The inadequacy of the Biological theory regarding the origin of consciousness has been well explained by J.W.N. Sullivan[91] in his *The Limitations of Science.*

"We see that the question of Evolution of Intelligence bristles with unsolved problems. We are not yet clear as whether certain types of behaviour are to be classified as intelligent, nor can we draw any clear line of demarcation between the conscious and the non-conscious. The connection between physical structure and mental characteristics is still very largely hypothetical. And we do not know whether consciousness arises only at a certain stage of complexity or whether it must be postulated of all livnig matter - or even of all matter. Thus the theory of evolution, although it can tell us a great deal about the development of our bodies, can tell us very little about the development of our minds. It may be that the structure of our minds is completely conditioned by the structure of our nervous system, but researches on the nervous system, at present practically throw no light on our mental processes. For the understanding of these we have to appeal to differen methods."[92].

What these different methods will be, it is not explained by the famous Scientist. Indian Psychology shall come to rescue here. According to Indian philosophers, the whole universe with its diversity of name (*nama*) and form (*rupa*), life and intelligence all around, has emerged from the Absolute, the Ultimate Reality, which is of the nature of Existence (*sat*), Consciousness (*cit*) and Bliss (*ananda*). It is Pure Consciousness, according to *Advaita* or *Ishvara* with Consciousness as its essential attribute according to *Vishishta-advaita*. Consciousness pervades the entire

[91] Psychiatrist from the United States (1892-1949), exponent of neo-Freudian thought and its development in a psycho-social direction in the United States.
[92] J.W.N.Sullivan, *The Limitations of Science*, p.107.

universe, and it permeates each and every element and object in the universe, differing in quantum or degree. Consciousness is the highest in Yogis, high in men, less in animals, still less in worms, still less in plants and in the least in matter (which we wrongly call "dead"). There is conscousness in each atom, which makes its inner motion resemble that of a solar system. There is consciousness in particles of sugar forming in the shape of crystal. Dr. J.C. Bose proved that there is consciousness in plants. Hence, consciousness does not emerge at any particular stage of evolution.

The three *gunas* (*sattva, rajas* and *tamas*) determine the degree of consciousness. In man, it is neither the nervous system, nor the brain that is responsible for intelligent behaviour. Brain and nervous system are the physical agents of the Self, and consciousness in an attribute of the self and not the body, brain or nervous system. As the mind is only an agent of the Self, its structure depends upon the needs of the Self, and so does the structure of nervous system and brain.

3. Physiological Basis of the Mind

Very recently, a good many neurologists, doctors, physicians, psychiatrists and psychologists made a deep analysis of the nervous system. They connected each and every mental task to one or other area of the cerebral cortex in the brain. They studied the intricate net-work of nervous tissues in the brain, and mapped the whole field. They cured thousands of mental patients through operations upon certain localities in the brain. They discovered the modifications in the nervous cells corresponding to each mental experience, e.g. linguistic development, habit formation, acquirement of skill, etc.

All this scientific discovery could pave way for concluding that mind is the same as nervous system, or that there is nothing like mind apart from the nervous system and brain. But such conclusions are far from truth [according to Vedic literature, *Editor's note*].

a- Firstly, all the phenomena of cortical function and behavious have not been explored. Wenger e Jones state:

”Many of the important problems concerning sensation already have been solved, but at least two major areas of unknown remain;

I- the problem of differential irritability of receptor cells,

II- the problem of quality in sensation”[93].

As in the field of sensation and perception, so in the field of emotions, the entire organisation of nervous system cannot explain the nature of pleasantness and unpleasantness, pleasure and plain. The same stimulus can be pleasure for one and pain for the other. Wenger e Jones frankly confess:

[93] M.A.Wenger, F.N.Jones and M.A.Jones, *Physiological Psychology*, p.426.

"We do not understand completely the important sensation which we call pain, nor are we certain about the portion of the cortex which is responsible for it. We know that it determines much of our behaviour, but we do not understand how"[94].

Had the nervous system been the be-all and end-all of our mental functioning, and had pleasure and pain no distinction, our world would have been a different one. No Buddha or Christ would have been born to relieve humanity of human suffering, because there would have been no human suffering. We may ask in vain the physiologists to discover in the cerebral cortex the seat of human suffering, and once discovered, ask him again to have a major operation and thus simplify once for all the whole jigsaw puzzle of human suffering.

The physiologists again, do not know what changes in the nervous system underlie learning and what regions of the cerebral cortex are concerned with memory. Reasoning and imagination are not located in the cortex. The relation between higher mental functions and cortex, are unknown. Nothing can be predicted from the study of brain and nervous system about the unconscious behaviour of an individual. Even the phenomena of sleep and dream are not well-explained. Regarding the degree of consciousness from the unconscious behaviour to complete alertness, Wenger and Jones confess again:

"What kind of processes are involved? At the moment no one knows. We do not know even the exact condition, which after a waking state to a sleep state or vice-versa"[95].

The same is true about abnormal behaviour. A few mental disorders may be ascribed to physiological defects, but not all. The scope of physiological operations for mental therapy is extremely limited. The

[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid, p.430.

most widely used treatment is electro-therapy. But it succeeds in certain cases only in the initial stages of abnormality. Doctors agree that the electric shock does nothing more than stimulating the nervous system. It is, therefore, useful only in certain cases where the individual suffers from Psychosis or Schizophrenia (*dementia praecox*) or other maladjustments evincing lethargic reactions to stimuli.

It is true that doctors have discovered certain psychological disorders due to physiological disorders. But this leads to no conclusion, because the reverse also is true. Doctors have discovered a number of physical defects originating from nothing byt psychological disorders. The effect of emotions on bile and ductless glands is universally known. The effect of anxiety through the Vagus nerve (10th Cranial nerve) upon the functioning of lungs, heart and abdomen is similarly clear. Anger and digestion are correlated and such diseases as cancer have in certain cases been ascribed to psychological factors.

Today, in the West as well, there is a growing awareness of the psycho-somatic origin of all disases, even those which are caused by well-known infective agents, usually present inoffensively in our organic system, or immediately neutralized by efficient antibodies. Pathologies result when the immune defenses are decreased by psychic causes and the system is thus weakened. The determination to live helps healing, depression does not.

Conversely the healing power of mind has been discovered by the Western doctors. And as such the nervous system cannot eplain the psychological disorders and mental diseases. Charles Sherrington, Professor of Physiology, Oxford University, after his life-long experiences regarding the functioning of the brain verdicts:

"The physical basis of mind encroaches more and more upon the study of mind, but there remain mental events which seem to be beyond any physiology of the brain."[96].

b- The physiological basis of mind is refuted from another point of view.

Is nervous system an instrument of the mind or the mind itself? If it is an instrument of mind, then no problem arises. Then we can postulate that with gradual increase in the complexity of animal behaviour, the gradual complexity in the nervous mechanism correspondingly followed. The instrument had to become finer and more adequate to cope up with the needs of the mind. But if the reverse view is held that complexity of behaviour followed from the gradual complexity of nervous mechanism, a number of puzzles remain unsolved:

I- The size of the brain must have some relation with the maturity of mind. But, says W.E. Le Gros Clark,

"it is an instructive fact that the size of our brain today shows an astonishing range of individual variation, and yet it has not been possible within wide limits to relate these differences in intellectual capacity"[97].

Should not then a genius have a brain of larger size? But no correlation has been found between size and capacity of the brain.

"Lenin's brain was examined microscopically in great detail and showed no certain difference from the brain of ordinary men"[98].

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[96] Basil Blackwell, *The Physical Basis of Mind*, p.3.
[97] Ibid, p.23.
[98] Ibid, p.43, quote from Eliot Slater's speech on consciousness.

Should we presume, on the principle of physiological basis of mind, that the primitive brain being less experienced and uncivilized was smaller? In this connection, Clark informs as:

"The fossil evidence indicates that the human brain has not appreciably changed in its size for about 200,000 years"[99].

II- There is also another problem that will remain unsolved, if we presume that the complexity of individual behavior is due to the gradual increase of complexity in the nervous structure.

Separate functions of the mind have been ascribed to separate areas of the cortex, and separate nerve fibres in the nervous system. Neurologists have discovered in the brain the most complicated patterns prepared out of twelve-thousand million nerves. What forms these patterns? Nobody knows.

Russel Brain, Physician to the London Hospital, makes a guess:

"My guess is that in the nervous system we are looking at the threads, while with the mind we perceive the patterns, and that one day we shall discover the patterns are made out of threads."[100].

Hence the necessity of mind to weave a pattern out of the threads.

Wilder Penfield, the famous neurologist of Canada, distinguishes clearly between the mind and nervous mechanism when he guesses...

"That something else finds its dwelling place between the sensory complex and the motor

[99] Ibid, p.23.
[100] Ibid, p.54-55.

mechanism, that there is a switchboard operator as well as the switchboard "[101].

In reality the relation between mind and brain is that of the operator and the instrument, the stream and the river-bed, the electricity and the wire.

Viscount Samual clearly distinguishes between the two and states that the body influences the mind only in the sense that

"the painter or sculptor is conditioned and influenced by his materials; the composer by the musical instruments that exist in his time; the architect by the available building materials; the craftsman by his tools, the captain and crew by their ship"[102].

Here he reaches the Upanishadic doctrine *atmanam rathinam viddhi* (*Maitri Upanishad*, II.3-4)[103].

It is futile therefore to expect any discoveries regarding higher mental functioning from cerebral cortex which is purely a physical instrument of mind and not the mind itself. S. Zuckerman, Professor of Anatomy, Birmingham University, gives his final verdict...

"The physical sciences do not seem to have advanced far enough to define the actual physical changes which underlie the process of learning. Even the most powerful instrument of research cannot help us at all here."[104].

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[101] Ibid, quoted in Wilder Penfield's speech *Cerebral Cortex and Human Mind*.

[102] Ibid, quoted in Viscount Samual's speech.

[103] A well known Upanishadic metaphor compares the *atman* to the passenger sitting on a chariot - which simbolically represents the body. The *atman* directs the chariot by giving instructions to the chariot driver (the intelligence), who in turn uses reins (the mind) to restrain and direct the horses (the five senses). See *Katha Upanishad* I.3.3-6.

[104] Ibid, p.28, quoted from S.Zuckerman's speech on *The Mechanism of Thought*.

Zuckerman is right in declaring that any instrument of research cannot help here, for the meeting place of mind and matter is not the brain. It is here that Indian psychology performs its duty proclaiming the truth and solving the problem. The problem of physiological basis of mnid, the nature and origin of mind, and the mind-body relationship has been solved by Indian psychology in the most convincing terms.

The first point to start is the metaphysical assumption that the substratum of all experience is neither the body, nor the mind, but the Self, which is of the nature of pure consciousness, and which partakes its essential attributes (as light, life and consciousness) from the cosmic consciousnes. So the Self, or *atman,* is the source of all human mental behaviour. Negatively the Self is neither the body, nor the nervous system, nor the brain, nor the stimulus-response mechanism, nor the behaviour, nor any complex chemical or biological product and nor the mind. Positively it has been described as Consciousness, the seer (*drishta),* the doer (*karta*), and the experiencer (*bhokta*).

Mind in Western psychology, is a limited concept. We substitute it in Indian psychology by Consciousness, which is a wider term and connotes not only thought, but the entire life and light that pervades each and every organism.

What we call mind in Western psychology is a limited concept, and is designated by such technical terms as *antah-karana* (in *Samkhya* and *Vedanta* schools of philosophy), *manas* (in *Mimamsa* and *Vishishta-advaita), citta* (in *Yoga)* and *alaya* (in *Buddhism*). It is no longer of the nature of consciousness but it is in the form of energy. It is lighted or reflected by consciousness or the Self, of whom it works as an instrument (*karana)*.

Mind is material (*annamayam manas)*, declared *Upanishads*, and this fact has always been affirmed by Indian philosophers. It is simply the higher form of matter, the subtlest form, converted into energy. This

> concept does not go against the latest scientific discovery that matter is convertable to energy and viceversa[105].

The phenomenon of the transformation of energy in matter and matter in energy, theorized only at the beginning of last century by modern Western physicists, was already known intuitively by the Vedic sages who had described it by using the concepts of *vyakta* and *avyakta,* indicating the universe respectively in its manifested and non-manifested states.

> The subtlest part of our food is transformed into mental energy[106]. So both mind and body, working as a physical instrument of self belong to the same class, with only different shades of quality.

The *Vaisheshika Darshan* philosophy describes the mind as a material substance (*dravya*), one of the eight archetypal elements of Nature[107], although it is distinguished by peculiar characteristics. The mind corresponds exactly, both in structure and in functions, to the characteristics of material bodies, defined by Maharshi Caraka.

> Apart from consciousness derived from the Self, reflected in it, mind has no power. Hence *manas* is dissoluble after death or after liberation.

At the moment of death the external mind (*manas*), the one which is most directly connected with the external sensory environment, is dissolved. However, the psyche as

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[105] See Einstein's theories and the conclusions of the experiments with Geneva's synchrontone on subatomic particles.

[106] Hindovedic psychology explains that the mind mainly feeds on three types of food: the first is the food of the physical body, which also affects the mind substance; the second is constituted by impressions, emotions and thoughts, which is an extremely important and delicate food on which depends the health of the psychic substance; the third and most important is constituted b the *gunas*, the subtle components of matter which, although impossible to destroy and eliminate, can be transformed into their reciprocal force relationships.

[107] The eight archetypal elements of *prakriti* are: earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, sense of ego or *ahamkara*. See *Bhagavadgita* VII.4.

archetypal element remains - the unconscious mental structure that forms that “psychic bubble” where the *atman* remains encaged even during the phenomenon of transmigration and in which he travels from one lifetime to the next, until the living being attains *moksha*, liberation from the cycle of births and deaths. The contents of the deep mind (*citta*) are critically important because they determine the being's journey in the samsaric process, according to the law of *karma*, taking the individual into conditions of life which can be more or less diverse (see *Bhagavadgita* XIII.22).

> So what the Westerners mean bymind is really consciousness which belongs to the self. The mind, apart from the consciousness of the self reflected in it, is not mystical or spiritual, but simply material. Hence the true mind which is responsible for intelligent behaviour is nothing but consciousness and is spiritual in character, but the mind as organ or agent is purely material.
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> Indian philosophers have made a very clear distinction between the two. Confusion arises because of absence of the right terminology in Western psychology. Sometimes *psyche* was used, sometimes *spirit* and sometimes *mind* for the source of this intelligent behaviour. Once we accept the trinity of soul (of the nature of consciousness), mind and body, governed by soul, the whole riddle is solved.

4. Relationship Between Mind and Body

All the Western psychologists have failed to give any satisfactiory explanation of the mind-body relationship. Various theories have been postulated, the major theories amongst which are: Materialistic Monism, Parallelism, Epiphenomenalism and Dualistic

Interactionism. But all the theories miss the fundamental truth which Indian philosophers have explained unequivocally.

(A) Materialistic Monism

Many a Western philosophers, unable to perceive a spirit governing the physical universe reduced the whole cosmos to one ultimate reality - matter. As at the cosmic level, so at the individual level there was nothing more than a physical body. "Body I am entirely and nothing more" - thus said the German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Another German Philosopher, Feuerbach (1804-1872) declared: "A man is what he eats." Accordingly, in words of Vogt, "thought is the secretion of the brain". Such thinkers declared that the relation between thought and brain was roughly the same order as that between bile and liver, or urine and the bladder. In words of Ostwald[108] (a German Chemist of last century), "all the mental processes are a form of physical energy". It is deducible from this sort of "mental physics" that a person's dreams and thoughts can be correlated with certain specific movements of brain molecules.

James and Lange, in their "James-Lange Theory"[109], declared that emotions are functional disturbances of the body. John Dewey[110] also believed that "mental processes are qualities or attributes of physical organism". And so did Watson and his followers of the Behaviourist School[111].

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108 Ostwald (1853-1932) is considered one of the founders of chemistry-physics.

109 According to James, emotions are merely the perceptions of specific bodily changes in the moment when they appear. In 1885 the Danish physiologist Carl Lange published a similar theory. Given the similarity of the conclusions expressed by these two researchers, these are commonly defined as "James-Lange Theory".

110 Philosopher and pedagogist of the United States (1859-1952); founder of Instrumentalism, a doctrine stating that intelligence is a product of biologic evolution, and "instrument" enabling the adaptation to the environment. See also the definition of intelligence given by Piaget: *The capacity of usefully adapting to reality.*

111 J.B.Watson, *Behaviourism* e C.L.Hull, *Principles of Behaviour*.

> Such a "Mental Physics" or "Mental Chemistry" may solve the problem for the materialists, but it raises one hundred more. Movements of the brain molecules are not thoughts. Anger is not the same thing as angry behaviour. The difference is radical as in sound and light, operator and the switchboard, river and the river-bed or electricity and the wire. The liver-bile metaphore is nothing but absurd because both as tangible and concrete, while-as thoughts are abstract. The physical and the physiological basis of mind is absurd, as has been shown above, while discussing the first two problems. Man is not a complex machine, as the dialectic materialists declare. McDougall refuted it long ago. Though the materialistic idea persists up to the present day, its absurdity has been proved beyond doubt.

Ayurveda considers the mind as distinct and separate from the body, although both are constituted by material energy; therefore there is a distinction in positions, characterisics, functions and treatment methods. According to the science of Ayurveda the psyche (*manas*) has the function of mediating through *buddhi* (intellect), between *indriya* (the sense organs) and the *atman* (the soul).

The *Caraka-samhita* explains that it is impossible to understand consciousness merely through the study of cerebral functions. What is psychic has its own language, while the physical or physiological has another language: the two dictionaries must be kept separate from each other.

According to Hindovedic psychology, the superficial mind (*manas*) is localized in the brain, which is its organ of action, while the deep mind resides in the metaspace of heart (slightly on the right of the heart as cardiac muscle), but the mind constantly and quickly moves through the body. It takes up the task of *indriyarthas* (sense impressions) and gives impulse to action. The various psychic functions like *chintan* (thinking), *vichar* (discriminating), *dheyan* (intending or desiring), *sankalpa*

(deciding), are described in details by the Ayurvedic treatises.

The *Caraka-samhita* precisely indicates the channels used by the mind to travel through the body (*manovaha srota* and *srotoviman*). They run not only through the body but they extend outside the body as well, reaching out up to a specific distance, and penetrating the individuals in different ways.

In this regard it is interesting to note that, according to recent scientific discoveries, even the immune cells possess neuropeptide receptors, that have been localized in other parts of the body as well, so that now it seems difficult to establish where the brain ends and where the body starts[112]. After the discovery of stem cells it is not strange to think of the body as a continuum that transforms here and there, specializing in different organs for different functions, all contained in those originary cells; on the other hand it has been known for a long time, for example, that the retina is a variation of the optical nerve, and so on.

How can this happen? Some scientists believe that, since all physical processes are characterized by a duality wave/particle, it makes sense to suppose that the same thing happens for the consciousness. In the form of a particle it seems to be localized in the brain, but in its wave-like aspect, consciousness, like all ondulatory phenomena it could produce effects at a distance, like psychokinetics effects, which imply an exchange of information between the subject and the reality external to the self.

By observing the description of the mind and the *manovaha srota* offered by the ancient *rishis*, we can easily see that the anatomy and physiology of the body are quite different from the anatomy and physiology (psychology) of the mind; and that body and mind, although interdependent and interacting, must be studied and treated as two distinct entities.

(B) Parallelism

112 See Michael Talbot, *Tutto è uno*, ed. URRA, 1997, pp. 137-8.

Among those who believe in dualism, *i.e.* body and mind are two separate entities, there is no unanimity of views as regards the relation between body and mind. One strong view in this connection has been that both work in a parallel order. Physical and mental states work independently without any casual relationship between them. How did this happen? Leibniz postulated that "pre-established harmony" existed between the two. In his own words "the body and mind are two clocks which agree perfectly and accurately". The reason for such an agreement can be questioned. Occasionalists[113] said that God intervenes. Spinoza (1632-1677) explained that body and mind are two different aspects of the same thing... God. "God is the true reality and presents himself in these two fundamentally distinct ways [body and psyche, *Editor's note*]"[114]. From the point of view of Indian philosophy, the first part of the sentence is alright, but it remains to be explained how he presents himself in fundamentally two distinct ways.

Fechner (1801-1887) tried to cover this absurdity by a mathematical metaphor by saying, that the two are "convex and concave form of the same curve". A better metaphor from the commercial field is presented by Lasswitz as "loan of money and asset at the same time". But metaphors cannot solve the problem. Body and mind are not two sides of the same coin, when we find that there is a causal relationship between the two, each affecting the other.

Even the universal parallelism[115], held by some is absurd, until the source of the coincidence of parallel functioning is explained. Two wheels of a cart run

113 Occasionalism is a philosophic doctrine teaching that the real cause of all things is God, and that finite causes (feeling, willing, sentiments) are only opportunities used by God to effect His decrees. The main exponents of this doctrine are A. Geulincx (1624-1669) e N. Malebranche (1638-1715).

114 W.B.Philsbury, *History of Psychology*, p.64.

115 According to the theory of *psychophysical parallelism*, the psychic and physiologic phenomena constitute two independent causal series, that do not interfere with each other, but correspond nevertheless to each other, term to term.

parallel only when there is a third force acting on both. But what is the third neutral force here? Parallelism is therefore illogical and unscientific.

(C) Epiphenomenalism

T.H. Huxley[116] (1825-1895), Santayana[117] (1863-1952) and others believe that mental events are by-products of bodily events; hence the word *epiphenomenon,* or by-product[118]. They believe that mental events are not physiological processes but are the results of these. This is just enother kind of materialism, which has been found absurd. Is all the mental advancement the result of matter? Paul Edwards objects: "Was history created by matter?"[119].

(D) Interactionism

Is another remedy suggested. Some philosophers believed in mutual interaction between mind and matter. Descartes (1596-1650) was the first propounder of dualistic ineractionism. To his mind is the thinking substance (*res cogitans*) and body is extended substance (*res extensa*), but mind itself is manufactured by the body. This is again unintelligible to us. This forms a vicious circle, and the cause of the mutual interaction is not known.

According to our Indian psychologists mind itself is material... a very subtle matter. Mind and body, both being material can act and react only in the presence of *atman*, which illuminates both. In the absence of *atman*, the mutual interaction of mind and

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[116] Naturalist, one of the most enthusiastic followers of Darwin. He created the term *agnosticism*, in the sense of inconceivability of the Absolute and the Infinite, as they are foreign to positive science.
[117] Philosopher of Spanish origin, from the United States, exponent of American critical realism.
[118] An epiphenomenon is an accessory fact, whose presence or absence does not affect the manifestation of a certain phenomenon. In medicine, it indicates a collateral symptom.
[119] Paul Edwards and Arthur Pap ed., *A Modern Introduction to Philosophy*.

matter is not intelligible. The mutual interaction was really objected to by later philosophers.

"How can something which cannot move in space, have no extension in space, move a brain molecule?"[120].

Once we accept *atman* the problem is solved, but Descartes and others could not distinguish between mind and the subject of experience which they called "the spiritual substance." Descartes' interactionism has a better meaning than the sort of interactionism suggested by David Hume, William Jones and Bertrand Russel[121].

According to David Hume (1711-1776) mind is like a theatre with successive scenes of experience and "they are nothing but a *bundle* or collection of different perceptions, which succeed each other with an inconceivable rapidity and are in perpetual flux and movement"[122]. His bundle concept fails when we ask the question, "who brings these in rapid succession?"

A partial idea of self is presented by Bertrand Russel, "The mental continuity of a person is a continuity of habit and memory; there was yesterday one person, whose feelings I can remember; and that person I regard of myself as yesterday"[123]. A full idea of the self at the back of all the mental experience is not revealed by Russel, and hence the circumlocution or beating about the bush with illogical arguments. James talks of "stream of consciousness", but knows not the source of unity forming the "drops" of consciousness into stream.

Unable to explain such objections to interactionism, there are some Western thinkers who

[120] Ibid.
[121] English philosopher and logician (1872-1970).
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

agnostically confess that the interaction exists but the *how* is not known. They discover that mind and brain do meet, but the meeting place is not known. Professor W.E. Le Gros Clark, Oxford anatomist, confesses, "Physiology and anatomy are unable even to suggest how the physio-chemical phenomena associated with the passage of nervous impulses from one part of the brain to another can be translated into mental experience"[124].

Another contemporary philosopher, C.D. Broad[125], believing in interactionism, discovers that mental phenomena survive even after the dissolution of the physical body[126].

If mind survives, then it means that it does not depend upon interaction of the body. How that occurs is not known.

Thus the traditional problem of body and mind remains as it is. And it will remain so, unless Indian philosophy intervenes. By accepting the trinity of soul, mind and body the problem is solved.

5. Survival and Immortality of the Mind

Materialists and Agnostics may not believe in the existence of spirit. Western idealists also do not believe in the survival of mind and the immortality of soul. William James laughed at the idea[127]. Bertrand Russel is a prominent atheist.[128] Though the Western mind in general is against the idea of immortality, but recent investigations in the field have brought to light this truth, and a number of psychologists and philosophers are prone to accept it.

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[124] Ibid.
[125] English philosopher (1887-1971); exponent of English neo-realism.
[126] Ibid, cap. III, C.D.Broad, *Mind and its place in nature*.
[127] William James, *Human Immortality*.
[128] Bertrand Russel, *Why I am not a Christian and other Essays*.

Gardner Murphy discusses this idea in his *An Outline of Survival Evidence*. Earlier to him McDougall approached the idea. John Haynes Holmes in a lecture deliverd in 1925 gives ten reasons for believing in immortality[129]. C.D. Broad collects evidence from the current psychical researches regarding the same[130].

Myers has produced two volumes on the subject. His volume I, is about “the actions and perceptions of spirits still in flesh”. His volume II deals with “the actions of spirits no longer in flesh”[131].

The Society for Psychical Research of America has thrown a flood of light on this subject. J.B. Rhine's experiments are notable in this respect. His latest works on the subject give ample proof for the survival of the spirit[132]. A better explanation of the Phenomena is given by Indian philosophers, through the theory of transmigration of the soul and Law of *karma*.

6. Extra-sensory Perceptions

All the phenomena of Extra-Sensory Perception (ESP) such as telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, precognition, mesmerism, dream-visions, apparitions, ghosts, mediumship, psychometry, psychokinesis, telekinesis, levitation, apports, etc. are not recognised in the normal psychology of the West, and constitute a separate branch of study called *Para-psychology.* For a long time researchers in this field were held in contempt, so much that the contemplated Professorship in Parapsychology was nicknamed as “Chair in ghosts”.

Objective researche and long observations of innumerable cases have brought to light a number of

[129] Gardner Murphy, *Modern Introduction to Philosophy*, chap. XIX.
[130] C.D.Broad, *Human Personality and the Possibility of its Survival.*
[131] Rosalind Heywood, *The Sixth Sense*.
[132] J.B.Rhine, (i) *The Reach of the Mind*, (ii) *New World of Mind*.

> new psychological facts, which are in no case "superstition" but are scientific facts. They may appear a novelty in all these experiments, and in the results obtained, but for an Indian mind there is nothing novel in these.
>
> A detailed description of the powers of the mind has been presented by *Patanjali* in his *Yoga-sutras*. The powers of the mind are so immense that Extra-Sensory Perception is insignificant.

Yoga literature describes in depth not only the areas of the psychic activity that are generally beyond the control of the conscious ego, known in the West as unconscious, but also the more elevated of super-consciousness, including extra-sensory perceptions and all the paranormal phenomena, for which Western psychology has no satisfactory explanation. The science of *Yoga* and *Bhakti* gives us the opportunity to investigate the many psychic functions, from the most common and fundamental to the most complex and unknown. All of them, however, can be accessed by anyone who possesses the required *know-how* and self discipline.

Due to the re-integration of the individual mind with the cosmic Mind the individual can reclaim the higher faculties of the mind (*siddhis*). These *siddhis* or paranormal powers, however, can cause serious damage to oneself or others if they are utilized improperly, or with bad motivations. For this reason, a solid ethical foundation based on *yama* (astensions) and *niyama* (prescriptions) constitutes the indispensable basis of *Yoga* discipline and of all genuine spiritual journeys, where the final goal is not merely re-establishing health and balance in the body-mind system, but mainly facilitating the realization of the self and communion with God.

7. Dreams

> The dream phenomena is still a riddle in Western psychology. Freud, Adler, Jung and others

discovered subconscious thoughts playing their part in the dreams. They have dealt with the pathological (morbid) dreams, and the dreams caused by organic disturbance. But what about a wealth of other types of dreams which do not come in the sphere of the above two? What about the prophetic dreams, dreams within dreams, telepathic dreams, clairvoyance dreams and many other "miraculous" types of dreams? These are unaccountable for in Western psychology.

Many hypothesis have been formulated recently. In this regard see Fritjof Capra's book *The Turning Point*[133] and Michael Talbot's, *All is One*[134].

From the Indian point of view, even the explanations given by Freud, Adler and Jung are imperfect, and in many cases far-fetched and wrong.

Besides the scope of dreams, problems regarding the very nature of dream-phenomena are unsolved. A few problems are given below:

(I) Are dream-perceptions produced by external organs of senses or not?

(II) What are the physiological organs that function while dreaming?

(III) Are the dream-perceptions real or illusory?

(IV) What is the relation between deep-sleep state and dream state?

(V) What is the relation between the wakeful state and dream state?

(VI) Are dreams anyway connected with the individual's past birth and future life?

(VII) How can dreams predict future events?

(VIII) How does ESP function in dreams?

133 Ed. Feltrinelli, 1990.
134 Ed. Urra, 1997.

> These and a number of such queries await reply in Western psychology. But detailed discussion, we find, about all these queries in the philosophical literature of India produced even before Christ. Caraka the physician, for instance, has conducted experiments on dreams, and he lived not later than Christ.
>
> The very fundamental question about the dreams is the subject of the dream. Who dreams? Who experiences the dream-perceptions, and enjoys or suffers sometimes in dreams? Who is it that works out problems (unsolved during the day) and feels inspired in dreams? The subject and object of dreams are fully explained by Indian philosophers.
>
> As regards the relation of dream and wakefulness, Indian thinkers have gone even further. They have explained at length the four states viz. wakefulness (*jagrat*), dream (*svapna*), deep-sleep (*sushupti*) and blissful state (*turiya*).

According to his state of consciousness an individual has access to different dimensions of reality, and will perceive himself and the world in different ways. In the waking state the individual perceives only the level of physical elements, and is aware only of the contents of the conscious mind, or the mind in its extroverted function, what classical *Yoga*, *Ayurveda* and *Bhagavadgita* define as *manas*.

The dream state, which we will detail in other texts of our Course, is an intermediate state between wakefulness and sleep, and brings to the discovery of a psychic dimension access to subconscious (*citta*), which in facts defines the state of sleep. However, beyond the rational mind and the unconscious mind, there is the spiritual dimension (*brahma-bhuta*), which becomes perceptible only in the state of super-consciousness defined as “fourth state” (*turiya*) where the individual finally sees reality in all its totality, and especially in its essence.

Regarding dreams, we want to clarify that the dream imagination, considered important for the analysis of the

various psychological types, and called by Freud as the "royal path" to the unconscious, has particular importance in yoga literature and discipline.

Dreams are certainly important indicators. No matter how reluctant an individual may be in admitting his shortcomings or some painful truths, his dream invariably tend to bring him, through metaphorical images, in front of himself and the reality of things. Those truths which the individual refuses to acknowledge and accept will repeatedly surface in dreams, although disguised in other appearances in order to overcome the censure of the conscious ego, which in some measure is active even in the dream state.

According to Freud's interpretation, dreams mainly originate from the contrast between the unconscious sexual impulses and the moral and social superstructures accumulated and consolidated since childhood, and therefore they represent distorted expressions or repressed desires, proposed to the consciousness through symbolic images. However, it has been amply demonstrated that Freud's literature exaggerates the importance of sexual influence on behavior, reducing all other psychic components to mere appearances.

According to the *Vaishnava Vedanta* the nature of dreamd depends on the level of evolutionary development of the individual, and therefore can be varied from mainly tamasic, rajasic or sattvic, or purely spiritual. Through the practice of love and devotion to God (*bhakti*) the individual can purify both conscious psychic products and the unconscious impulses, including the dream imaginations, whose effect on the individual personality are certainly not less influential than those generated by activities performed while awake.

The interpretation of dreams has a relevant role in Indian psychology as well, and it remarks that this very delicate operation should be performed only by individuals of proven competence: a mistaken or literal interpretation of the dream, and the suggestion power it contains, could result in serious personality disorders in the individual.

8. Heredity and Environment

A detailed study of Biology in the West revealed a number of new facts regarding the influence of heredity and environment upon the living organism. Experiments were conducted on the posibilities of transference of acquired characteristics from the past generations to the future generations. The effects of the type of seed and the type of soil were clearly demarcated, proving the equal importance of heredity and environment. The same generalisations were verified in relation to the human beings. Thus heredity means the particular combination of genes of the chromosomes got from both the parents. The genes contain the most prominent physical and mental characteristics. In order to compare the relative importance of heredity and environment, we can take four different types of cases::

(I) Two persons of the same heredity reared in the same environment;

(II) Two persons of the same heredity reared in different environment;

(III) Two persons of different heredity reared in the same environment;

(IV) Two persons of different heredity reared in different environment.

If we apply simply the generalisations of Biology, we might come to strange results.

In the first case, siblings brought in same environment must attain equal success in life. But observation fails here. Brothers of genius or fools were not always genius or fools. Nor had great men great fathers or great sons. It has been observed that one brother died a millionaire, and the other a pauper. Even identical twins born in the same family attained different status in life.

> In the other cases also observation and genetic generalisation have been different[135].
>
> Where do the generalisations fail in certain cases, if not in all? Psychologists attribute the failue to other variables like will and X factor (as Alexander calls it). It is a safe postulate to attribute variations in life-achievements to variations in "will", under conditions where all the factors of heredity and environment are constant. But here lies the fundamental problem. Wherefrom the *will*? Besides "will", a layman believes in destiny playing a great part in the life of a person. Western psychologist feels shy of believing in destiny, for to him it is unscientific to believe in the supernatural. Destiny and "will" play no less an important role in moulding one's life and determining the heredity as well as the environment.
>
> This is explained in Indian philosophy fully well. Here two fundamental doctrines viz. the Transmigration of Soul, and the Law of *Karma* explain the whole situation.
>
> It is the *samskaras* of the past lives that determine firstly, the heredity of a man, and secondly, party his environment where he is reared. For the success and the failure of an individual's life, credit goes or fault lies in the *samskaras*, rather than the heredity and the environment. Indian psychology throws light on the immense possibilities of moulding and modifying to the extreme degree the past *samskaras* through the agency of effort and will. Without accepting these fundamental doctrines, psychology is incomplete and can go no step further.

Human personality is not static: just like a river that always carries new waters, the uninterrupted flow of thoughts, configuring new mental fields, slowly determines the continuous transformation of character, both in the

[135] Very recent scientific discoveries have demonstrated that man has 30,000 genes. This suggests that the behavior and the nature of individuals are determined more by the environment than by heredity.

positive and in the negative sense. According to the *Vaishnava Vedanta*, no existential condition in the embodied life is eternally fixed. Neither the human form, or the animal form, or any other form. The destination of the living being after death, after leaving the physical body, is not something predestined according to some unknown and incomprehensible laws, but depends almost[136] completely on the way the individual has been acting towards himself, the others and the world.

Bhagavadgita shows how the cosmos is pervaded by immense energies and forces founded on the three *gunas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*), which condition the life of the individuals, for good or bad. Sattvic energies increase virtue, far-sightedness, wisdom; they give psycho-physical vigour, intelligence, mental sharpness. Rajasic energies push towards frenetic action and intense desires. While tamasic energies drag towards inertia, lethargy, darkness, lazyness, vice and dullness.

Hence the importance to operate conscious choices in all fields of existence (type of food, company, actions, impressions, words, thoughts etc.) in order to increase the contact with those energies which elevate to the platform of *sattva guna*, the source of psycho-physical well being and essential stage on the journey to transcendence.

According to Hindovedic tradition, each individual can operate the helm of his own life, and in any circumstance and moment, due to divine Grace, everyone has hope to improve oneself and improve one's existence, to the point of attaining the final liberation from the various forms of conditioning, and thereby the joyful and luminous rebirth to the reality of Spirit. Thus, destiny is not a mysterious imposition on man.

9. Mental Hygiene and Psycho-pathology

This last century saw the birth and development of the school of psychoanalysis. The discovery of the

[136] The *Shastras* also consider the intervention of divine Grace (*prasada*), which can modify the *karma* of an individual, even in a radical way.

subconscious mind was a land-mark in the history of Western psychology. Freud made attempts to explain the overt behaviour of persons in terms of repressed wishes stored up in the unconscious. To Indians who know the importance of *samskaras* and the accompaniment of the mind stuff (*citta*) with the transmigrating soul, there is nothing new in the theory of the *unconscious*. But as soon as Freud, Adler and Jung make further analysis of the subconscious mind they vary in their views, and in fact all of them falter. Hence a number of problems still remain. The greatest drawback of psychoanalysis is that it "does not plumb the unconscious deeply enough to reveal the self and get it fully distinguished from the ego"[137].

(I) Freud gives too much prominence to sex. He traces all the sub-conscious behaviour to sex-urge, which is far from being acceptable.

(II) Freud speaks of *Death Urge* besides *Life Urge*[138]. Why should a person have a Death Urge? This is unaccountable for[139].

(III) He interprets all dreams in terms of sex. His interpretation is far-fetched. Professor McDougall, after getting his dreams analysed by Freud, states that Freud's formulae for the interpretation of dreams may be true for some dreams but not for all.

(IV) The same is true of Adler. Every action cannot be traced to master-instinct[140].

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[137] A.W.Watts, *The Supreme Identity*, pp.89-90.

[138] Freud believed that instincts could be classified in two categories: life instincts and death instincts. Life instincts, including hunger, thirst and sex, are aimed at self-conservation and survival of the species. The *libido* is the kind of energy through which they manifest. According to Freud, besides the creative force of life instincts, there is also the destructive force of death instinct. This type of instinct can be directed inward, as in suicide or masochistic behavior, or outward, as in the case of hate and aggressive behavior. For Freud, man is irresistibly attracted by death: "death is the purpose of all life" (Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*).

[139] Unfortunately, there are also cases where the individual actually develops this *death impulse* or *death wish*, but according to Hindovedic psychology, these are pathologic conditions.

[140] In opposition to Freud, Adler does not believe that sex constitutes the dominant impulse in human personality, but postulates the existence of a dynamic stimulating force which organizes and directs the various resources of the personality exactly to the priority purpose to which all man aspire: superiority.

> (V) Even if the diagnosis of abnormal behaviour made by Western psychiatrists be accurate, the treatment they suggest fails.
>
> Freud believes in full expression of the sex-urge. This has aggravated the problem and not solved it. Due to the recent trend in giving undue importance to sex in art, drama, theatre, literature and society sexual immorality is increasing. Freud might have been right to some extent in his generalisation from a sample of cases taken from the materialist European society, where sex-appeal, exhibitionism, sex-immorality and craving for sexual satisfaction was high. But the generalisation is not universal. Over-emphasis on sex, and undaunted liberty in sexuality, is a menace to the society. Fraud has been responsible for a school of his thought, and has given rise to peculiarities like Freudian literature. Freudian pathology fails here, for liberal expression of sex, rather than self-control is dangerous and deteriorating.

Neurosis and serious personality disturbances can both originate from the removal of instincts and from their indiscriminate indulgence.

The *Vaishnava Vedanta* explains that psycho-physical energies, which are essential along the journey to transcendence, must not be negated or repressed, but they should be utilized in a correct and beneficial way, favorable to the development of the personality, or in other words, they must be sublimated.

Experience has demonstraed that throught the discipline of *Bhakti-yoga*, it is possible not only to sublimate impulses and eliminate their unconscious self-destructive charge, but also to re-integrate them on the platform of pure consciousness. On the contrary, when they are indulged in without a proper discrimination, some impulses cloud the consciousness, creating confusion, frustration and suffering, enslaving the individual to ephemeral conceptions and identities and destructive emotions and instincts. The science of *Yoga* precisely aims

at the opposite result: make the individual conscious of himself, capable and free to think and act for his own good, and for the good of others.

(VI) The treatment of "sublimation" and "redirection", sounds nice, but it is yet to be seen how everybody's urges can be sublimated or redirected. The process of sublimation or redirection needs another urge, inside the individual. What is that urge or power?

(VII) Psychoanalysts may discover the causes of mental conflicts, but they seem to have failed in practical therapy of integrating the personality of the patients. There are mental asylums, but the treatments are very slow. Recently some therapists have introduced religious therapy. This is a step in the right direction. But the major task is ahead. Indian psychology propounds *self-control, self-analysis, concentration of mind, development of will*, and *integration of the self*. It reveals the highest powers of the mind. While Freud leads us to self-indulgence, Patanjali leads to self-control and self-realization, which are the truest goals of life. Indian psychology gives full account of not only the subconscious, but of four continuous and gradual states, *viz*. Sub-conscious, Conscious, Dream-conscious and Super-conscious.

(VIII) Very few laws of mental hygiene are available in Western psychology. A better account of attaining balanced personality, mental equipoise, tranquility amidst torrents of misfortune and unfoldment to the highest degree of all the latent potentialities is given by the Indian seers. They teach optimism to the frustrated pessimist. They promise glory, light and divinity after a period of dark misfortune. The neurotic in the West can get no consolation anywhere except in the teachings of Indian seers. Schopenhauer with all his neurosis and frustration, in his later years got consolation only from *Upanishads*. He declared, "*Upanishads* have been the solace of my life, these will be the solace after my death".

Materialism leads to suicides, exploitation, deceit, aggression, massacres, battles, wars and mass destruction. It paves way to frustration, neurosis and disintegration of personality. Western psychology cannot provide remedy to all thi. Indian psychology is the soothing balm for the ignorant and suffering humanity.

The principles of mental hygiene proposed by Indian psychology are particularly described in *Bhagavad-gita* and in classical *Yoga*, two subjects of our Course.

10. Positive Status and Normative Status of Psychology

Western psychology has virtually acted as a positive science attempting to describe in detail the essentials of human behaviour, as those exist. Recently its canons have been applied in the field of education, industry and sociology. All the same it simply attempts to give an insight into the nature of mental functioning, and only suggests a better way of mental functioning. Beyond this it does not go. It is a normative science only in a very limited sense.

Indian psychology is a perfectly normative science in so far as it instructs a detailed procedure of mental progress *e.g. Yoga* practices. It instructs at every step and suggests a regular course of effort in the direction of highest unfoldment of mental and physical powers. It promises extra-sensory powers *e.g.* the eight *Siddhis* and other miraculous powers of the Psyche.

11. Methods in Psychological Investigation

The chief methods employed by Western psychologists are: Introspection, Observation, Experimental and Analysis. Introspection has been the oldest method of studying psychology. Essentially it is a

method of philosophy, and hence when psychology did not assume an independent status apart from being a branch of philosophy, this was the only method employed. But later on it was criticised by scientists on the grounds that it is purely a subjective method, personal and private, amenable to subjectivity and individual variations.

The personal equation of the investigator can interfere with the objective analysis of the matter of fact. This method therefore gave way to the method of observation[141], which was employed invariably by the Behaviourist school. The data collected by observation was repeated several times under controlled conditions for verification. Most modern equipment like electric devices were used for recording of behaviour changes.

The method employed in the physical sciences, namely the experimental method, is now more popular as it has received the approval of the intellect of the scientific age. Prof. Wundt opened the first psychological laboratory, and since then the method has become very popular. Experiments under controlled conditions on heredity, perception (Psycho-physical methods), learning, memory, motivation, emotions, measurement of abilities, assessment of personality, growth and development have been made, and complex experimental designs prepared. The method of psycho-analysis has been employed for the exploration of the Unconscious, because the other methods could be employed only with regard to the conscious behaviour. The words - association Tests, free- association Test, dream interpretation, Thematic Apperception Test, Rorschach Inkblot Technique[142], and many other projective techniques have been employed to fathom the

[141] Even the method of observation, in reality, is always conditioned by the psychology of the observer.

[142] Swiss psychologist (1884-1922). Rorschach's test measures the emotional, motivational and relational of the individual in order to study his personality; it is based on the interpretation of 10 tables reproducing ink blots: by evaluating the responses according to pre-fixed criteria, the psychologist deducts global and particular aspects of the personality.

unconscious and to psychoanalyse the subconscious behaviour.

The method of observation and experimentation have a limited field, hence the necessity of psychoanalysis and introspection. These two methods were not new to Indian thinkers, and were actually used by them where necessary. For instance Charaka conducted experiments on the influence of physical stimulus on dreams. It has been recognised by Indian thinkers that psychological behaviour being purely subjective cannot be studied in the same way as Physics and Chemistry. Psychoanalysis is a better approach to this study, but it is somewhat difficult to apply. The most suitable method of psychology is introspection. Western psychology cannot approach the depths of mind through the objective methods employed in physical sciences. Our psychical apparatus is too fine and subtle to be mapped by gross physical instruments. Experiments at the perceptual level may succeed, but for understanding the functioning of the higher faculties of mind like reasoning, judgement, imagination, talent, sentiment, will, devotion, tranquillity and equipoise, nothing but introspection will suit. Observation and experimentation are confined to lower types of conscious behaviour. The introspection is applicable to all the four stages, viz. Unconscious, Conscious, Dream-state and Superconscious. Every individual can introspectively study his own mind, analyse his mental tendencies, understand his weaknesses, control these, develop higher power and integrate the whole personality. This is the subject matter of *Yoga*[143].

Western psychology has therefore to borrow anew the method of introspection from the Indian philosophers [as C.G. Jung did, *Editor's note*] and dive deep into the psychic ocean, rather than count the ripples on its surfaces.

143 Traditionally, *Yoga* is a path for initiates: it can be followed successfully only if one can avail of the guidance of an expert person, a Master in the science of Self.

X. Conclusions

The dominant current running throughout the major philosophies of the West is materialism. The scientific age has created a skeptic attitude towards all the idealistic doctrines hitherto accepted by prominent thinkers from Plato to Kant. Even the theism of Christianity was challenged by astronomers who mapped the heavens with a telescope but found no God, by biologists who analysed life to its minutest form and discovered only a protoplasm[144], by physicists who analysed matter and discovered only electrons and protons[145], by historians who generalised that every new discovery brought a change in the philosophical outlook of a society, and by philosophers themselves who declared idealistic doctrines mere superstitions. A few reasons for this attitude are:

(I) The West could not accept infallibility of reason beyond certain point. It could not rely on intuition where reasoning failed, whileas intuition is one of the major instruments of valid knowledge, as recognised by Indian thinkers.

(II) The West could not go beyond the perception of senses, and hence could not arrive at the essence of Reality which transcends the bonds of physical perceptions.

"The West refuses to accept the postulate that the world of mind and matter is but an appearance of a deeper reality which lies beyond the perception of our senses, regardless of how magnified these may be by powerful instruments of precision"[146].

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144 At the time of writing this text, the author was not aware of the decodification of DNA.
145 At the time of writing this text, the author was not aware of the progresses of quantum physics.
146 Theos Bernard, *Hindu Philosophy*, p.14.

The Vedic texts, just like Western science, explain that the senses are only able to perceive an infinitesimal part of reality[147]. In fact, reality does not consist solely of the sensitive dimension; there are many other levels of reality, and they can be perceived by the individual only if he raises his own level of consciousness: besides the physical level there is the psychic level and after that, the most elevated level, the spiritual. These different existential dimensions do not contradict each other but rather integrate with each other. Each of them represents one of the many manifestations of that one Reality that constitutes the origin and the foundation of all that exists, and that is indicated in the philosophy of the *Upanishads* with the name of *Brahman*, supreme Spirit.

(III) West believes that no man has ever attained supreme knowledge.

One of the characteristics of Western thought is the tendency to negate *a priori* the possibility that one can become perfect, or that someone perfect may exist. On the contrary, according to Vedic tradition perfection exists, although it rarely manifests. It is a *status* of spiritual nature that can be attained also by someone who lives in the world, provided he has transcended mundane consciousness; this state of being is defined by the *Shastras* with the term *jivan mukta* (liberated in life).

> "In the Orient, it has been accepted that man can know metaphysical truths by direct experience. He need not depend upon speculation, inference or faith[148]. The literature is replete with the writing of men who are said to know the whole truth of Nature and human existence, and the

[147] According to contemporary science, the senses can perceive about one billionth of reality.
[148] Through the spirituale experience (*anubhava*), in facts, it becomes possible to directly perceive the Divine..

> teachings of these men have been set forth in the philosophical systems of ancient India"[149].

Because of the limitations of Western philosophy, Western psychology could not be built on strong foundations. In this Così Gordon W. Allport[150] doubts the universality of Western psychology:

"Does the excited psychology of action and behaviour so characteristic of America treat adequately all the capacities of human mind? Are the powers of meditation revealed through *Yoga* illusory and slightly absurd? ... Ignorance of Eastern thought leads us to give callow and mischievous answers to such questions as these"[151].

Western psychology is a product of Western philosophy, as it is based on the Western materialistic philosophy. Unless there is a radical change in the materialistic philosophy of life, true nature of Reality cannot be known, and as a corollary, all the instruments of materialistic philosophy will be inadequate to reach at the truth of mental functioning. This is the reason why most of the fundamental problems of psychology remain unsolved. A number of such problems were discussed above.

Colossal destruction caused by the two world wars in this past century have shaken the faith of many a Western thinkers in materialism and science divorced from spirit. A tendency is growing to accept the spiritual essence of the universe. Says Professor Eddington[152], in a discussion of science and mysticism:

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149 Ibid, p.14.

150 Psychologist from the United States (1897-1967); he described personality as the unique and dynamic characteristic of the individual, against all generalization of psychic behavior.

151 Swami Akhilananda, *Hindu Psychology*, Introduction by Allport, p. X.

152 English astronomer, mathematician and physicist (1882-1944). He executed many research studies on physics and theoretical astronomy.

"We have seen that the cyclic scheme of physics presupposes a background outisde the scope of its investigations. In this background we must find first, our own personality, and then perhaps a greater personality. The idea of a Universal Mind or *Logos* would be, I think, a fairly plausible inference from the present state of scientific theory, at least it is in harmony with it"[153].

Similarly G.N.M. Tyrrell approaches the Indian idea of Divine Union:

"In the present crisis of world History, one thing however stands out clearly. It matters profoundly what view is taken of the value of human individual. Only if we are intellectually convinced that it extends beyond the limits of atomic consciousness, and reaches out potentially to that for which the ordinary name is God, can the purpose of human society be secured... From the nature of the personality of man, springs up the possibility of the mystical *divine union*, the promise of a limitless inheritance and the hope that in literal truth this mortal shall put on immortality"[154].

Unless Western psychology takes into cognizance the ultimate goal of human being as the mystical divine union, it remains to be narrow and circumscribed. Alain Danielou, in his book *Yoga, the Method of Re-Integration* refers to the same Divine Union as the be-end of all Psychology and Philosophy:

"When the agitation of the mind is stilled, supra-mental perceptions appear, and with them comes the perceptions of the fundamental Union of all that exists; consequently, all things are perceived to be in their natural aspects of this unity. If following any river

[153] Ibid.
[154] G.N.M.Tyrell, *Personality of Man*, p.284.

we go down to the ocean in which all rivers unite, we can then go up any river we choose; similarly if we dive down, with ourselves to that point where all beings are one, we can thereafter enter into the most secret heart of all beings or things of the differentiated world"[155].

A comparison of the Western and Indian approach to the same subject was presented above. The express purpose of the present investigation is to bring to lime-light the deep and everlasting [and verifiable, *Editor's note*] wisdom of Indian seers on this subject of utmost significance for the highest benefit of humanity.

By its particular nature, Indian psychology offers satisfactory answers to many existential questions, and as we have mentioned in this text, supplies economical and ecological solutions to problems that Western psychology has not been able to solve. However, the author does not intend to diminish the value of Western psychology, but rather to present the opportunity and possibility to operate a new synthesis between knowledge and experiencs of East and West, to attain a dynamic integration that comprises the entire anthropological sphere and contributes to a higher harmony between man and man, and between man and Nature.
Our wish is to overcome the anachronistic oppositions as the East-West concept, precisely. Knowledge is an universal patrimony, and the more it becomes integrated, the more it will be capable to give man the answers he needs.

In this introductory text, by briefly mentioning the thought of some of the most famous schools of Western psychology, we have briefly explained the direction of Hindovedic psychology. Precise references to the specific

[155] Alain Danielou, *Yoga the Method of Re-Integration*, p.76.

schools will be supplied in other syllabus presentation of this Course.